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Vice Presidents' Guatemala Meeting Postponed

PA0802214889 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2032 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Guatemala City, 8 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—The Central American vice presidents' meeting to discuss international economic aid initiatives, scheduled to be held in Guatemala this week, "has been postponed," a government source said today.

The Central American vice presidents' meeting was convened by Guatemalan Vice President Roberto Carpio Nicolle for 9-11 February; however, "it has just been suspended," a government source who asked to remain anonymous told ACAN-EFE.

He added that the meeting was postponed because "Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramirez could not attend because he had traveled to Cuba."

The source did not say whether a new date had been set for the meeting.

Carpio Nicolle announced last Monday that all vice presidents had confirmed their attendance at the meeting in the Guatemalan capital because they considered it to be of "great importance" to review the political situation and Central American development.

In view of the nonattendance of the Central American vice presidents, Carpio Nicolle will meet with the independent "Sanford" International Commission and with a Spanish Government delegation headed by Luis Yanez-Barnuevo, secretary of state for international cooperation and for Latin America. [passage omitted]

Summit Agenda Not To Include FMLN Proposal

PA0902214189 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2042 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] San Salvador, 9 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte said today that he will not add the most recent FMLN political proposal to the agenda of the Central American presidential summit to be held 13-14 February.

Duarte said: "The guerrilla proposal will not be on the agenda. I will explain to the other Central American presidents that the proposal is currently being discussed by all Salvadoran official bodies."

On 8 February, the Salvadoran guerrillas asked the area presidents to discuss their proposal at the summit. According to the proposal, the FMLN will recognize the legitimacy and results of the coming presidential elections in El Salvador if the government agrees to postpone the elections until 15 September and to offer new electoral guarantees.

The FMLN's petition was accompanied by the announcement of a unilateral 48-hour cease-fire during the presidential summit, which will be held at a hotel on the Salvadoran Pacific coast.

In addition, Duarte told the media today that only Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo had confirmed their attendance at the summit so far, but that Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and Honduran President Jose Azcona are expected to confirm their participation in the next few days.

The Salvadoran president asserted that "everything is ready" for the Central American summit, which has been postponed five times since last August.

Duarte said: "We hope something new will come out of the summit." He added that he supports the proposal to install UN troops on the borders of Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.

Reports from New York say that the five Central American foreign ministers and UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar agreed on Wednesday to send a team of military observers from the FRG, Canada, and Spain to Central America.

The international military mission will be in charge of "on-site" verification and follow-up of the commitments made by the Central American countries to end their support of irregular forces in the area.

The ending of support for the region's irregular forces is one of the main points of the Esquipulas II agreements signed by the Central American presidents in August 1987. The goal of the upcoming summit is to resume peace efforts under that agreement.

Cuba

Castro's Caracas News Conference Broadcast

FL0702153289 Havana Television Cubana Network in Spanish 0130 GMT 7 Feb 89

["Part 1" of news conference held by President Fidel Castro in Caracas, Venezuela, on 4 February—recorded]

[Text] [Moderator] Good evening to everyone, distinguished guests, colleagues, and friends. First of all, we would like to thank everyone for having accepted the invitation to this conference. As you can see, the room has turned out to be somewhat small. We would like to ask the cooperation of those persons who are asking the questions, as well as of those comrades who are taking pictures or filming this.

Comrade President, 309 journalists have registered for this conference. Among them is a broad representation of Venezuelan journalists; there are 181 Venezuelan journalists who belong to 64 press organizations, 21 of which are from the Venezuelan interior. There are also 128 journalists from other countries; 93 of them are here for the presidential inauguration and 21 are permanent correspondents. A large number of journalists have signed up to ask questions. Without further ado, we will allow them to begin speaking. There are microphones located in each end of the room. Once again, we ask that you remain silent so that we can hear.

Fine. The first one is Omar Luis Colmenares, deputy chief of the international section of the Caracas EL NACIONAL.

[Colmenares] Good evening. Mr President, in the speech President Carlos Andres Perez gave this morning, he urged you to reiterate your role in Latin American politics. He said: We need you to be part of Latin America so that Cuba can participate more in Latin America's international relations with the developed world. A few hours after this statement, what answer does President Fidel Castro have for the Venezuelan president?

[Castro] I have been informed about that statement, I read it, and I completely agree. I accept it, and I am in a position to support that idea with pleasure.

[Colmenares] In what way do you think Cuba could become integrated?

[Castro] Well, I think we are becoming integrated. [laughter] I think our presence here in Caracas is an expression of our will to become integrated, as well as our participation in SELA, our visit to Quito, to Mexico, and our cooperation in the search for solutions to the region's problems. Right now, of course, I cannot mention all the forms of cooperation, I can only express our willingness. I read with pleasure those words and we support the idea.

[Colmenares] [Words indistinct] President Perez as a call for Cuba to join the OAS?

[Castro] Well, if we are called to join the OAS, and Latin American governments believe that it would be beneficial, we would be ready to join the OAS.

[Colmenares] Thank you.

[Moderator] (Sorelis Figueroa) from the Caracas DIARIO now has the floor.

[(Figueroa)] Good evening, commander. In your statements here in Caracas, you have said that you have discussed several topics with President Carlos Andres Perez, including the nonaligned countries, which you have [words indistinct]. Venezuela has been interested for the past few years in joining that group. My question is: In what way can Cuba help and perhaps mediate among several positions to facilitate our country's membership in that movement?

[Castro] There is hardly a shortage of Cuban cooperation. Venezuela has much authority, much prestige. Carlos Andres has very extensive relations with several nonaligned countries. He has worked on the North [corrects himself] South-South dialogue. He has been part of the commission. I am certain that Venezuela's request to become a full member of the nonaligned countries will be very well received and will be supported unanimously.

Some resistance, some difficulties have emerged on certain occasions. For example, one can ask what Guyana's attitude might be because of the difficulties that have occurred in the past. When I had the opportunity to speak with President Hoyte, Hoyte [repeats himself], who visited Cuba, I asked him about this matter. I asked him what his attitude was and he immediately and very clearly told me that Guyana would not raise any objections and would support Venezuela's membership in the Nonaligned Movement. I then asked him.... [changes thought] I think he spoke about this with Carlos Andres. I also informed President Carlos Andres about the Guyanese Government's excellent disposition.

[(Figueroa)] Did Guyana maintain its position during the meeting you held with President Desmond Hoyte on Thursday afternoon, commander?

[Castro] I did not have the opportunity to meet here in Venezuela with President Hoyte. I simply greeted him at the luncheon hosted by President Carlos Andres Perez. We had already spoken for many hours about many topics and I warned him there... [changes thought] We agreed that it would be difficult to meet again and talk here in Venezuela. However, I am grateful to and also have a very good impression of President Hoyte. He is a very frank man. He is a very serious man and in my opinion, the only obstacle that could arise to Venezuela's

membership in the Nonaligned Movement no longer exists. I am certain that Venezuela will be very welcome by the nonaligned countries.

[(Figueroa)] Thank you, commander.

[Moderator] We now give the floor to Estrella Gutierrez, IPS [INTERPRESS SERVICE] correspondent and president of the Foreign Correspondents Association in Caracas.

[Castro] Where is she?

[Moderator] Here she comes.

[Gutierrez] Good evening, Mr President. In 1985, you said that....

[Castro, interrupting] What year did you say?

[Gutierrez] I said in the year 1985.

[Castro] Yes.

[Gutierrez] You said that the Latin American countries, which were then involved with the Cartagena consensus, instead of solving the debt problem, limited themselves to writing little love letters without really responding to the industrialized countries. Four years later, with the activities of the Group of Eight, especially after the December meeting in Rio de Janeiro and the one in Caracas, do you still think that Latin American countries have stopped writing love letters in order to actually establish a solution or a joint platform on the debt? In this sense, how do you think the industrialized countries will respond?

[Castro] It seems that you have good records, because it is true that I did say this in 1985. I did speak of the love letters to show how little attention was given, how the industrialized countries paid practically no attention to the documents and messages issued by the Group of Eight.

It seemed to me that a stronger stance, a more energetic demand, later emerged. There was a greater willingness to fight on behalf of that group. I have also said, in case you haven't made a note of it—I don't know if it was in Mexico where I said that the Group of Eight should speak on behalf of all Latin American and Caribbean countries. That representation should not be arrogated and no one should be excluded.

The fact that the region has 85 percent of the debt is not reason enough to exclude anyone. I would say it is an additional reason to include everyone. If it owes so much, it would be better to have everyone's support to solve the problem. I also expressed my opinion that no country should be excluded. With regard to this, I spoke, let us say, in absolute terms. No country should be excluded. I was not (?even) thinking about Cuba; I was thinking about Chile and Paraguay. No one should be excluded from our peoples' common struggle to solve the problem of the economic crisis, deal with the debt, and carry out another series of struggles that are required to solve the problems of our countries.

The Group of Eight should formally represent all Latin American and Caribbean countries so that it can speak on behalf of all, because the Group of Eight is a group that is already in existence. I have stated this point of view to various Latin American leaders, and they agreed. I also think we should look for a way, either through SELA, ministerial meetings, heads of state meetings, or consultations....[changes thought] I believe that all Latin American countries should allow the Group of Eight to represent them in the dialogue that must be held with industrialized countries. At least, the opportunity should be given to all those who want to be represented. Should 100 percent representation not be attained, it should at least have the support of the large majority of Latin American governments, and Caribbean governments—let's not forget the Caribbean.

With regard to action by industrialized countries, we could say that to date it has been quite indifferent. To date, we have not had an adequate answer from the industrialized countries. But I am under the impression that those countries are gradually becoming more aware of the problem and its seriousness. I think that awareness is increasing in Europe, in some countries more than in others. I think that even in Japan this awareness, this concern is increasing.

Something very important... [changes thought] I am under the impression—I sense, and I hear news and rumors—that there is greater concern from the U.S. Government and its current administration over the seriousness of the economic problem and the Latin American crisis, and over the terrible burden of the foreign debt that could be termed as subversive and destabilizing. I think this is very important, because, often, when I have spoken with U.S. leaders, I have expressed my point of view about their inability to make policies, their habit of improvising policies, and the consequences that ignoring these problems could have, because our hemisphere is becoming a powder keg. I think that if anything has been gained, it is that the U.S. Administration is becoming aware of this problem, and this would mean some progress would be made toward the establishment of a dialogue.

To date, the strategy used by creditors has been to organize a club and to talk individually with each one of the countries. This does not even leave room for the basic conditions of equality and fairness. I also think that Latin American and Caribbean countries must join forces for that dialogue. I don't see any other path, any other alternative. I think our countries should have a firm, energetic attitude. Nothing is gained by begging. I

think one should demand. I think the least that can be demanded is dialogue. I sense the moment is nearing when that dialogue can come about.

[Moderator] Okay, we go on down the list, and Alexis Rosas, from Venezuelan TV Channel 8 and NUEVO PAIS correspondent, has the floor.

[Rosas] Good evening, commander. We discussed this topic, which you just mentioned, when we spoke with you Thursday night when you got to your room. The hours passed quickly and Vice President Dan Quayle declined to meet with you or with Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. My question is: What makes you so optimistic when this is part of the U.S. principle of prejudice?

I would like to add another question. What do you expect from the Central American presidents' meeting in El Salvador on 13 and 14 February in regard to the possibility of peace?

President Oscar Arias said in conversation with you that he saw that during its course, at least in El Salvador, it would be very difficult to achieve peace by integrating the guerrillas into democracy.

[Castro] Who asked Vice President Quayle for a meeting? This is the first report I've heard that I asked Quayle for a meeting. I don't think that Daniel asked for a meeting either.

I think it was before you and I spoke. I don't know if it was said later. Someone spoke on his behalf and Quayle said he had no plans to meet either with Castro or with Ortega but neither Castro nor Ortega asked Quayle for a meeting. I pronounced Quayle correctly, didn't I? [laughter] I really want to know. [applause]

We did not say this in a scornful manner, not at all. We explained the realities and we also explained that we did not have any prejudices. We have no prejudice in matters that regard us and we do not consider it a sin to meet with Quayle. In my opinion, this is what happened.

I think that... [changes thought] I was asked this question when I arrived. I arrived early but the statements were made earlier.

[Rosas] You continue to remain optimistic that George Bush will change Reagan's policy in regard to everything that occurs....

[Castro, interrupting] I am going to use a handy little phrase: I am moderately optimistic. [laughter] First of all, I try to use logic. I try to be realistic. The United States, as much as Latin America, needs this dialogue. I think the United States, as much as Latin America, needs to cooperate to find a solution to this crisis. I think everyone needs it because if developments continue as they are, there is no telling where they will lead. It could be....[changes thought] I said this is a subversive, destabilizing factor. I think that if they act logically, they should promote that dialogue. In addition, there have been reports, rumors, and people have talked about this.

I have an impression, which is not the same as just being optimistic. I am neither an optimist nor a pessimist in this matter. I have the impression that the U.S. Government, with the current administration, has a greater awareness of the seriousness of the problem. Therefore, this increases the possibility for this dialogue. Reports to this effect have been received from different sources.

That was your second question. What is your third?

[Rosas] The question was about your expectations....

[Castro, interrupting] I cannot read my own writing here.

[Rosas] It was about your expectations for the San Salvador meeting on 13 and 14 February on the Central American problem.

[Castro] I can honestly tell you that in this respect, I am relatively optimistic. [laughter] I say that because of the impressions I got from the meetings. I even participated in some of them. I participated in a meeting Carlos Andres held with Central American leaders. President Alan Garcia was also there. I was invited to participate in that meeting. I have also spoken with Daniel.

The other day there was another meeting that I could not attend because I had other engagements here with many people. I asked Comrade Carlos Rafael Rodriguez to attend the meeting on our behalf. He also got a good impression.

I know that the Sandinists are very decisive about finding formulas. These solutions will not be easy. However, I am aware of their decision and their willingness to work in that direction. At one time it was not known if there was going to be a meeting or not.

Carlos Andres, as well as Arias and practically everyone, expressed their concern that a meeting would be held without results. They wanted to ensure the results.

I know they have made progress. It would be a good sign if the meeting were held—a few days are left, not many. They were basing the meeting on the premise that it should not be held if results were not going to be obtained. These elements of judgment and especially the disposition in which ... [rephrases] the flexibility and the will the Sandinists have is what makes me be relatively optimistic on the possibilities of success.

The last thing you were referring to was El Salvador. I have talked with President Arias several times. I came away with a good impression of the meetings, a very good impression of him. I have said it before—for a while, I thought perhaps he had been given the Nobel

prize as a way for the Europeans or I believe the tribunal....[changes thought] Gabo [Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez], you should know who are the ones who give out the Nobel Prize. [laughter] [unidentified speaker makes indistinct remark] But what is it, a foundation? [unidentified speaker makes indistinct remark] That's the one that gives them out, but who nominates the candidates? Anyway, I thought this was done perhaps to help achieve peace in Central America.

When I had the chance to meet with Arias, to talk extensively with him, when he told me about the long track record he has on this, when I listened to his reasoning—added to some information I had regarding how little Arias' effort had been appreciated because he was looking for a peace formula and not a warmongering solution—I reached the conclusion, and I told him so and I said it publicly, that President Arias really deserved the prize and he won the prize. This is my point of view. We have talked a lot about all subjects.

There has been something almost like a competition between Costa Rica and Cuba in certain education, health, and other indexes. They have worked a lot in that direction and a healthy competition has come about in these areas. We had talked a lot about this. Now we talked again. We talked for almost 2 hours. There weren't as many appointments that day. You can imagine how meetings are scheduled in a situation such as this one, how messages are exchanged. Sometimes a certain time is set and it is impossible to meet because other things come up.

I really had a pleasant time talking to him. I believe we have reached higher levels of communication and mutual understanding. I do not want to mention all the details here. It would take too long. I have defended some theses. He has some views about which I have tried to persuade him with considerably strong justifications. He has some ideas, premises on which he bases his arguments that I know are not exactly so. But I can say, because I know he remarked—I believe he said on television that he talked with me—that I said he had overestimated my influence with the FMLN. He said that he agreed but that they would never do anything against a view I had expressed. You can't even say that. I have explained this to him. I even tried to get them to talk with him. I tried. I tried to be a mediator. I said: It is better for you to listen to him.

No organization lets someone else speak on its behalf All political and revolutionary organizations, like countries, are very zealous of their prerogatives, their independence, their personality. I have always been careful not to adopt paternalistic attitudes toward political organizations or take upon myself to represent those organizations. I respect their independence very much. I believe that it is precisely this line, this style, that has allowed us to develop excellent relations with many organizations. We have never adopted hegemonic positions, ideas, or attitudes, regardless of the size of the organization. I am even more cautious with the small ones.

This is the view I maintained in my explanations to him. I have also explained to him our ethical principles. He was telling me that there are times when one has to stop showing solidarity. I said: This is not the way to deal with any organization. We would never do this. This does not go along with our precepts.

These are the kinds of things we talked about. He is truly very interested in finding peace for all of Central America—not only in Nicaragua but also in El Salvador. I discussed with him the declarations released recently by the FMLN. The FMLN takes a position that I believe is very good. I believe it is very sincere, very clear, very transparent. I am speaking of the proposal to postpone the elections—I am not sure if for September or around that time—and to take a number of steps to guarantee a clean electoral process, an electoral process with guarantees for all. It categorically says—as it has never said before—that if this occurs under those conditions, the FMLN would accept the authenticity of the electoral process. I read this phrase, the principal phrase, and I thought it was very clear. The statement did not say this was going to be the final solution, but one of its lines said that this would lead to an irreversible—it uses this word—process for the political solution of problems in El Salvador. They were very clear, very categorical statements. I do not believe I am the only one who has valued all these positive aspects of the organization's statement.

The U.S. State Department itself reacted positively. This had never happened before with any of these statements. This could also be a symptom of a better political will to find political solutions instead of military ones. The State Department said that this proposal should be taken into account. This is something that seems very important to me. So, this time when I spoke with President Arias, this declaration already existed. It was one of the subjects we discussed. It also seems that it is something else that has come about that is very positive. We spoke about all these things. I think that, without being too indiscreet, I have basically explained to you the things we talked about on this subject.

[Moderator] Fine; (Marcel Roo) may now speak. He is a correspondent for the Spanish press agency EFE.

[(Roo)] Good evening. Commander, I would like to ask you two questions. One deals with the Palestinian problem. The Palestinian State has just been created at the United Nations, and we would like to know your opinion. The other question deals with a statement you made during your speech marking the 31st anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

[Castro] Thirtieth anniversary.

[(Roo)] During the 30th anniversary, from the Santiago de Cuba balcony, you said that the revolution is going to last 100 years. I wanted to know why you give an ending date to the revolution.

[Castro] Well, I think the creation of the Palestinian State is an important step forward, and it has been recognized by a large number of countries. I don't know if over 100 countries have recognized it, or almost 100.

Where did you go? You asked the question and got lost. [laughter] Stay around.

I also think the Palestinian cause has gained a lot of international support in recent times. I believe this is a result of the heroic resistance of the Palestinian people—unarmed and only using their bodies, their lives. It is such admirable resistance that it has awakened a great feeling of solidarity throughout the world, even in areas where there was not much support for the Palestinian cause.

The creation of the Palestinian State has determined a series of important events. First of all, I would say it has created a more solid unity among Palestinians. It has brought about an analysis in the United Nations of the Palestinian problem, as well as in a growing number of European and other countries that have expressed their support for a political solution, for the need to find a political solution to this problem that has been going on for so many years.

I think that an important step has been taken by the Palestinian movement and this improves the chances for a solution. The Palestinians have recognized and accepted the UN resolutions on the issue and they have recognized the right of the State of Palestine [corrects himself] Israel to exist. A series of important steps have been taken in many directions and I think progress is being made toward a political solution in the Middle East which is today one of the most serious problems that still exists. I think that we should all work to find a political solution to the Palestinian problem.

In regard to my remarks from the balcony—it was not a serenade [laughter]—I was expressing certain ideas. I was responding to those who thought that the revolution was reversible. There are those who thought that new generations who had not experienced the problems of the past in our country, who had not suffered, would be weaker generations ideologically. They thought those generations could be influenced. Some thought the revolution could be reversed, reversed [repeats himself].

I am familiar with the ideas of all those institutions that make studies. I am familiar with the ideas of many circles in the United States that have not renounced the thought that the revolution will disappear. They analyze alternatives to methods on how it should disappear. Since they have not been able to make it disappear militarily, they will attempt to make it disappear by ideological means. They think that the new generation will be easier to influence when the generation that led the revolution no longer exists.

Those remarks were a response to this and I expressed my confidence in the new generations because I know them. I am familiar with their qualities, their virtues, their revolutionary awareness, even though they have not lived under capitalism. That is what I wanted to say and I gave it a date. I wanted to say that the revolution is a process that develops with time.

We are not going to talk about a political phenomenon. We are going to talk about a religious phenomenon. It could be said that Christianity will last 100 years or that it will last 100, or 2,500, or 3,000 more years. It could be said that the most noble ideas in Christian thought will disappear: the idea of justice, love for one's fellow man, all those ideas. They will not disappear.

The revolution is a concept. It is an idea, a change in the world, the establishment of new values. It is in that sense that I wanted to say that the revolution will last 100 years. I just wanted to say 100 years. However, I do not agree with the idea that the revolution will literally last 100 years.

Our revolution has lasted more than 100 years because our revolution began 10 October 1968 [year as heard] when the first war of independence was led in our fatherland by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes, father of our country. It has been much more than 150 years. We say our struggle is the continuation of that struggle.

They fought for independence for 10 years. They were not able to win independence. They fought alone. They did not have many small towns fighting for their independence. It was the people of a very small island who fought against Spain for 10 years. They did not reach their goal but they helped renew the struggle.

U.S. intervention occurred. We did not achieve our complete independence and we have always said that our revolution is the continuation of that struggle. It is the continuation of the revolution that began in Yara in 1868. Thus, the revolution has now lasted more than 100 years as an ideal for justice, liberty, equality among men, and well-being for our people. Those ideals are renewed, perpetuated. We could also say that if we consider this to be the revolution, then the revolution can last 1,500 years, 1,000 more years. The revolution can last forever. It was in this sense that I was discussing years.

However, I do not agree that the revolution will only last 100 more years. I would like it to last as long as our people exist, as long as our fatherland exists. [applause]

[Moderator] We now give the floor to Jesus Romero Anselmi of Radio RQ 910 and director of the program entitled, Hot Torch [Antorcha Caliente]. [laughter]

[Castro] Hot Torch?

[Romero Anselmi] Antenna, the program is called Hot Antenna. It is called Hot Antenna. [laughter]

[Castro] Okay. [Laughter]

[Romero Anselmi] No one would listen to it if it were called Hot Torch.

Mr President, in the Caracas meetings, one of the topics that generated the most news was the debt. Everyone spoke about the debt during the Caracas meetings. The Group of Eight has become a group to discuss debt problems. Everyone talks about the debt in every group.

Whether we, the Latin American countries, pay the debt or not, we will continue without integration. Latin American integration is not possible.

Why is integration not a part of the rhetoric of Latin American leaders? Why was integration practically absent in a very superficial declaration on the Andino Pact, which Cuba (?supposedly) has nothing to do with. Besides this, there is no statement on Latin American integration.

We talk about exports. We are exporting capital and we are barely importing consumer goods. Everyone talks about nontraditional exports. Why is there no nontraditional export market in Latin America, the Caribbean, Central America?

[Castro] There were all sorts of meetings in Caracas. Unfortunately, I could not attend every one of them. [laughter] Among other things, it was a lot of trouble to move around in the hotel. It became a pitched battle that truly made me very sad. That is why I could not participate in all of them. There was even one meeting that I regretted very much not being able to attend.

We were told at the luncheon at the "Casona," as you call it, that there would be a meeting. Carlos Andres himself told me that night or the following morning at the meeting of Central American leaders. The luncheon was at 1230. I asked: When is the luncheon? I was told it was at 1230. I thought that the luncheon would begin and that it would be followed by a meeting.

I then went to Bolivar's tomb to lay a floral wreath. That took some time.

When I arrived there after 1230, the meeting had just ended. I missed a very important meeting. It seemed very important to me. I have a few ideas I wanted to discuss in relation to this need to support and designate the Group of Eight to represent us in the dialogue that will follow. I truly regret not being able to participate in that meeting.

You talk about rhetoric on the debt. Look, as I have explained, one could not expect a profound analysis of the problems in Caracas. That is absolutely impossible in an event such as this. I think that the presence here of almost all the political leaders of Latin America and the Caribbean expresses their willingness. It becomes a symbol, the expression of a tendency to move toward unity and action, toward a common struggle.

However, we could not expect to see spectacular agreements and resolutions here because it is not possible in an event such as this. A meeting of 1, 2, or 3 days would have to be called especially for this. The topic would have to be discussed thoroughly, and thoughtful statements would have to be made on the problem.

Of course, the debt is the most discussed topic at this moment because of the difficulties it creates for everyone. However, for example, I think, and we have stated this many times, that there are a number of factors involved.

We talk about solving the debt problem.

[Romero Anselmi] But whether that is paid or not....

[Castro, interrupting] We've discussed solving the problem of unequal trade, an end to protectionist measures, dumping and other methods used to exploit and plunder our countries. We talk about the need for a new international economic order as stated and approved by the United Nations.

These are joint ideas. A single one of these factors cannot solve the problem. Tomorrow, the debt could be forgotten and we would continue to be in the same bad state or even worse because through unequal trade, other countries have taken much more from us than the total amount of the debt.

We talk about the debt but no mention is made of unequal trade. We must discuss how they sell us products at a higher price each time and how they pay us less each time for what we sell. There is data, statistics to show this. There are irrefutable figures to show this. This is a very serious problem, too. It's not just the debt. The need for a new international economic order is inevitable.

All of this, however, is still not enough. We also need integration. We have stated all this. Other leaders also state this in one way or another. One may emphasize one thing and the other will stress something else. I remember that we have been stating this combination of factors since 1985 because this is an integral group of problems and needs in our countries. If they are not resolved, not even the independence of our peoples would be possible. The future of our peoples, a place in the world in the upcoming century, the political and economic survival of our peoples would not be possible.

This is how we see the problem and we don't state this as simple rhetoric. It is true that there is much rhetoric. There is no doubt. We have to stop the rhetoric and turn the words into acts. This is a very real need.

It does not seem unusual to me, however, that a substantive document was not issued on all these points because an event of this nature is not conducive to this type of analysis, to this type of work. Perhaps it might be more conducive in a meeting of 3 or 4 days such as those the Nonaligned Movement hold. They draft documents and they issue declarations which is possible to do during that time frame.

There were meetings of all kinds among the Group of Eight, among the Central American leaders. There were all kinds of meetings but there was no meeting with a definite purpose to work on this topic. However, I think, I consider it to be positive, very positive that this expression of a united spirit was demonstrated.

It seems to me that the president of Venezuela and the country of Venezuela itself have demonstrated their ability to hold meetings. They have demonstrated their prestige. The thing is to promote this type of tendency, this movement in a certain direction until the problems are discussed in depth and all these things are discussed with clarity, with much precision in an objective manner so that these things do not become simply rhetoric or words, so that we can work toward a program of this nature.

The export of capital is very real. It's tremendous. It is said, and the international organizations agree, that between 1982 and 1988, the net capital that left our countries was $174 billion. That's the net capital that was taken out. This is an unusual phenomenon. It is truly unusual. Some say that the figure is $180 billion. This past year, the net capital that was taken out was $29 billion. This does not include capital flight. That is not included in this figure. This figure also does not include what is lost in unequal trade.

If all this is added together, one can see with an almost mathematical clarity the plundering we are experiencing, the unbearable situation in which we live.

Naturally, more than arguments, objective truths determine the facts, and will eventually determine the behavior to be followed. The objective reality is so serious that it will inexorably determine, sooner or later, the behavior to be followed—and the sooner the better, the later the worse. Inevitably, every time there is a crisis, the steps and measures to handle that crisis also come about.

That is how I view the problem. Frankly, I would not dare, in any way, to underestimate the importance of all these meetings. However, I believe we are making progress. For several years, we have been observing what has been happening in this hemisphere; and presently, we are noticing new phenomena. That is why I think we are nearing the hour of truth, and the hour of decisions.

[Moderator] It is now William Echevarria's turn. He is a young journalist from Channel 4, Venevision, the first one to interview Comrade Fidel on his arrival in Mexico....[corrects himself] Caracas. [applause, cheers]

[Echevarria] Good evening. First of all, I would like to thank the president for his attitude on arrival here in Venezuela.

Getting to the subject, first of all, I would like to ask something that many people think and ask questions about: Is Fidel Castro waiting until he dies to leave office? Would a possible successor be his brother, Raul? Another question is: At the moment, many political analysts are thinking about the weakening of the socialist and capitalist systems. Maybe at the moment, we need a new political theory that would be a sort of balance between the two. Would the conjunction of the capitalist and socialist systems be considered a new theoretical policy?

[Castro] Well, I will try to answer the quetion about what many people think: Will Castro wait until he dies to leave office? I think there have been many people, especially to the north of Cuba, that have been wishing Castro would die so that he could not carry out his activities in Cuba. Frankly, I would like to leave power before I die. [laughter] If someone could guarantee that for me, I would be very happy. I would rather leave death for later. [laughter, applause] What you are saying with regard to Raul is a result of known reasons. There were many assassination plots against the revolution's leaders, especially against me.

This is not something I have made up. This is testimony in the U.S. Senate which investigated a few of the cases, and considered them as proven. The United States, the U.S. intelligence organizations, their technological power, and all their capabilities for death cannot be underestimated. I truly admire their inability to kill. [laughter] They thought of everything. They knew if I went to the beach, if I picked up shells, or if went underwater fishing. They even invented a pretty shell that would explode when I picked it up. Who knows what was supposed to happen to me with the shell, the underwater creature. I am surprised at that. Every time I see a shell, I remember the plots. [laughter] On more than one occasion, I have seen a pretty shell, and I don't pick it up. [Castro laughs] This is dumb, anyway, because one knows about shells. [laughter] One has some experience.

They even invented tobacco to poison me. [laughter] At that time, I had not quit smoking yet. They invented things for my beard to fall off. [laughter] What was I going to do? They did not do any particular damage to me. The reason for the beard was that we didn't want to

waste time shaving. Besides, we didn't even have knives for that. [laughter] Then they just wanted to ridicule us, and wanted our beards to fall off. I think that they should be very happy that my beard is gray. [laughter] I know of people who shaved it before the gray hairs showed. So, it seems that the gray hair can be more dangerous than the beard falling off. Well, this is simply ridiculous. But they thought of everything—shootings [words indistinct].

Once, a lot of bazookas, weapons, were taken out of Guantanamo Base. I thought it was enough to kill an elephant and not a man. They had rifles with [word indistinct] telescope, poison.

I could tell you a story about the importance this has, just to give you an idea, since it is being discussed.

I was once going to drink a milkshake. Someone was there. I drank the shake. There was someone there, who had been influenced by the CIA, with poison in his pocket. He became scared at the last minute. He appeared to think: Its effect will be too quick and I won't have time to escape.

In Chile, when I toured Chile, there was a mass of people. The great welcome I received from a million people over many kilometers was dangerous. This was during the Allende government. There were people there with cameras. They obtained Venezuelan passports and had the credentials of Venezuelan journalists. They had cameras with weapons inside them. They stood as I'm standing here today, pointing their weapons, but they weren't suicidal and they didn't shoot.

What I want to say with this is that these experiences are very well known. We said that the Yankees should not delude themselves into thinking that if they kill me the revolution will end. We have someone who would immediately assume my responsibilities. This is an elementary precautionary measure.

This occurred during a public ceremony at Revolution Square. Since Raul was considered, in the Yankee documents, in the Yankee information systems, to be more radical than I....[interrupted by laughter] Since Raul has very great qualifications—I won't give a biography here—and since in my opinion he has the skills and the confidence of the people, I used the theory that if I died, they would get someone more radical than me. [laughter] This is what we felt. We then selected a second alternate successor and we felt we should also have a third and fourth alternate, even a fifth, so that there would be no impasse, no problems. I think we have not done this sufficiently well but these are decisions that the party and the leaders of the party have to make.

This decision was made so early that the party was still not functioning. The new party did not yet exist. What existed was our movement. A new party had not yet been created as a result of the fusion of the various forces. However, it is the party, not I, that has to make the decisions if something happens to me. There have been many opportunities. Fortunately, nothing has happened—fortunately, for me. [laughter] [Castro chuckles] Someone else may think that this has been very bad luck for them.

I repeat, however, that this is not my decision. That has to be decided by the party. It has to be decided by the party, the leaders of the party, as well as the leaders of the state. That is the way things are. Don't think there is a king or a one-man government. We have a government with a collective leadership. The Council of State is a collective organization. The PCC Politburo is a collective organization. Don't think that I'm doing whatever I feel like doing, naming whoever I want to name.

If you want to criticize powerful people, you can analyze the institutions of the United States and see the power the U.S. President has. If someone has studied Roman history and the book of the 12 Caesars, which I think was written by Suetonius, he can see that U.S. presidents have more power than a Roman emperor.

The President of the United States can declare war all by himself. He can unleash a nuclear war without consulting with anyone. That is true. He carries a little briefcase. What is that briefcase for? They say it contains the codes. If a U.S. president goes crazy one day and opens the briefcase, he can unleash a nuclear war before anyone realizes he is crazy. [laughter, applause] Yes, yes.

They say, they say [repeats himself] that Nero did not have that kind of power. They say he set Rome on fire and then played a guitar or a lyre, or I don't know what, while Rome burned. [laughter] However, he could set Rome on fire but he couldn't do anything else. He could not set the world on fire. That is well known. That is a reality. It's incredible, fabulous. There was never again such an accumulation of power.

I cannot declare a war. I cannot declare a military action. That has to be discussed. The leaders of the party and the state discuss this. I cannot name an ambassador, nor do I want to do so. I cannot appoint a minister nor do I want to do so. I cannot name a vice minister.

In all parts of the world, presidents can make appointments based on laws. I don't know; it's something like Law 512 [as heard]. I don't appoint ambassadors. All the presidents of the world have that authority.

In Cuba there is a procedure. Several proposals are made. The Politburo analyzes who should be ambassador. I cannot tell you here who will be ambassador to Venezuela. I cannot decide who will be ambassador, minister, or even an official.

I do not name anyone. Sometimes, I have to officially sign what has already been agreed. I will not deny that I can influence, and I have authority within our institutions. That is understandable; many years of struggle

have gone by and people have trust. Of course, I will not deny my influence, but often, not everything I think of is carried out. Sometimes, the majority opinion is followed.

An example I can cite is the establishment of the peasant free markets. That was a mistake in our country's conditions. That is what happened as a result of copying. This is something we should not have copied. I did not agree, but I accepted the opinion of the majority. I never try to impose views within the leadership. Although, I must admit I do have influence and authority.

This briefly defines the functions we have and the procedures we follow. I would say that any president has more power than I do. However, it would probably not be as easy for someone else to have the influence that has been gained through our many years of experience, relations with the comrades, ever since we began our struggle—with very few resources up to now. This is how our country actually functions and the way in which decisions of this nature must be made—decisions that may concern you.

[Echevarria] Mr President...

[Castro, interrupting] You were talking about the analysts' theory of equilibrium. I think there is a problem with that. I think that capitalists and socialists have problems. I agree with you—these are important problems. Capitalism has serious problems—it is the system. The situation we are experiencing is ideal for this system—a system through which we are being plundered. It is ideal that a third world exists. It is ideal that over 130 countries are underdeveloped. What originated this? Colonialism, neocolonialism, and the exploitation of our peoples originated this situation. We finance the development of industrialized capitalist countries. What is the consequence....[corrects himself] the cause of development? Are we inferior beings? Are we worth less than the Europeans. Is it that our marvelous mix of Indian, black, and Spanish—which is what the majority of Latin Americans are—or Portuguese and Caribbean is no good? Is it that we, the residents of those nations, are an inferior race? What did underdevelopment do to us? Is that a just, humane system? We can see it in the crisis. It is a system that has led 4 billion people in the world into misery. This cannot be an ideal system. If this situation exists, there is a crisis in the capitalist and imperialist system when you see the order that it has established in the world.

So, we have two worlds. We have a rich world, and the waste of the resources it uses is almost irritating. Every day they plunder more. They buy our coffee, raw materials, and whatever else they cannot produce at a low price. They buy our cocoa [word indistinct] basic products, as cheaply as possible. They have imposed those conditions on us. What they do sell to us is increasingly expensive. When you try to buy an x-ray machine, or medical equipment, or industrial equipment, you will see how the price is ever higher. What they sell to us has been produced at at salary of $1,000, $1,500, $2,000; and what they pay for our products has sometimes been produced with wages of $40, $50, or $100. All this is a sign of a crisis in the capitalist system. There are also serious problems in socialist countries, in many socialist countries; we also have problems. Socialist countries have made mistakes, and so have we. But I have always said that it is better to make our own mistakes and not soemone else's. That is one of the views I hold.

Socialism is new, very new. It still has a lot to learn and a lot to look for in terms of efficiency. It is not a 500- or 1,000-year-old system. Capitalism began its development over 500 years ago. And I admit....[changes thought] The truth is that even today, Western propaganda is putting a lot of emphasis on this suppossed crisis. [Words indistinct] a definitive and irreversible crisis, like a failure of the sytem, which I do not believe. After 30 years of struggle and experience, I feel more of a socialist than ever, and I belive in socialism more than ever. I belive in it as a more just system. I am not saying that it should be imposed, or anything like that.

Today, I was explaining to a group of intellectuals-....[rephrases] I answered a question from one of them who asked: Can the theory be accepted that the alternative in Latin America is either fascism or socialism? I gave my honest opinion that fascism is falling by the wayside—aside from what can happen in a particular country. Generally speaking, nothing worse than what has already happened in some countries could happen anymore. What happened in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay can no longer happen. Fascism is falling by the wayside like an anachronistic instrument. On the other hand, I think there is a greater possibility for military coups. However, I have said that in the current conditions, there is a greater danger of social upheavals than of military coups. Countries are becoming unmanageable, ungovernable.

The objective situation converts....[corrects himself] has come to crush the prestige and authority of politicians because of unsolvable problems. I did say that I did not want the immediate alternative to be socialism. I also said that we could not wait for socialism to arrive in order to fight against the debt or for integration, for unity, or all those objectives. I even said that socialism does not assume integration. Theoretically, it does; but everyone could be socialist and not be in agreement. Sometimes even within socialism a strong nationalism, national self-interest, and chauvinism emerge. This is because socialism is not a world system. It is a system of independent countries. I was saying that we have to begin fighting as of now for all these objectives with the governments that exist in Latin America. We do not have to wait for socialism to exist. That would be crazy. That would be complete inaction.

I think that we....[changes thought] Many of these problems are of interest to social sectors. They interest the

middle class, the worker, the businessmen because they are all suffering the consequences of this. They cannot wait for socialism to fight for these goals.

This is what I was saying today. I do not think that there is a definite crisis; not at all. There is a series of tests. We do our own thing; others do theirs. We cannot share other people's criteria on how to resolve these problems but we respect those criteria. Above all, we are in favor of perfecting socialism, as Che stated. Che thought and meditated about this a great deal. His premature death unfortunately prevented this idea from being developed further.

I am against the use of capitalist mechanisms in the construction of socialism. That criterion is based very much on Che's ideas. He arrived at these views before we did. While we were preoccupied with our tasks, fighting against the Giron invasion, the problems of the October crisis, the survival of the country, he was thinking about these things. He was very studious. He had been named industry minister and he had to administer the socialist industries and deal with the problem of their organization. There is a book on Che's economic thought which is worth reading. There is also a book on our positions.

I am profoundly convinced, however, that we—I respect what everyone else does—should not use capitalist categories and methods to construct socialism. I do not believe in the possibility of a convergence or a fusion of the two systems. I believe a system is either capitalist or socialist. What can occur in socialism is retrocession. It is not written anywhere that socialism is irreversible in any country, and neither is capitalism. One can advance toward socialism and afterward, because of errors or because of a combination of factors, return to capitalism. A country can break away from capitalism and advance toward socialism. These are two very different things.

We recognize that efficient capitalism exists in some European countries; in Sweden, for example. However, Sweden does not say it's a socialist country. It says it is a free enterprise country, a capitalist country. It says it is not a socialist country. It has a much better distribution of wealth. It sets very high taxes. If someone earns $1 million, he has to pay half of that. Enterprises pay taxes. The state tries to lighten the burden. It tries to introduce health, education, social security, and assistance programs. However, it does not pretend to be a socialist system.

There is a socialist party in the Spanish Government but there is no socialist system. It has a clearly capitalist system. It is very capitalistic and it also is trying to find a better distribution system. Sometimes conflicts arise like the ones that have recently emerged, social conflicts.

In France there is a socialist government of a socialist party but there is no socialist system. It is capitalist, simply capitalist.

What I don't believe in is a hybrid system. This does not exist. I think that there are statisticians, who are much more intelligent, and other people who have tried to strive for the survival of the system. They do not practice the methods that were practiced in the times of Engels, when he studied the life of the working class in England, when children worked up to 14 hours, when there was hunger. All those problems existed.

The theoreticians and the leaders of capitalism have worked hard, especially after the socialist revolution, after the fear of socialism emerged, after the [words indistinct], after the October revolution. Their fear of revolutions made them humanize their system as much as possible or make the system more tolerable.

However, from my modest point of view, no hybrid system is possible and no fusion is possible. These are two totally different concepts. I think that we should defend those concepts and principles. That is what we do. We do not want to alienate ourselves from anyone. We want to apply our own criteria, our own point of view.

However, I don't believe in the theory of fusion. I can believe in better distribution within a capitalist system, a better distribution of wealth; but I don't believe in fusion. These are two completely different concepts, like a square and a circle.

I don't know if philosophers have discovered how to square a circle, but they are incompatible. [laughter]

[Echevarria] Mr President, your first few words indicate that we Venezuelan journalists may soon be able to learn what Cuban reality is like.

[Castro] Has someone prohibited you from doing so? Did you ask for a visa?

[Echevarria] I can ask for one...

[Castro, interrupting] You are the first one to see me. You don't have to thank me; I should thank you. Thanks to you, I had my first contact with the Venezuelan people and it wasn't planned. [applause]

[Moderator] Lenin Balero of the newspaper PANORAMA in Zulia now has the floor.

[Balero] Mr President, it is a pleasure to have you visit our country. In recent months you attended the Latin American presidents' meeting in Quito, Mexico, and now here in Caracas. You may have observed the changes that have occurred in Latin American policy. What will your position be in the immediate future, in regard to your country, Latin America, and the Caribbean, to more strongly apply the democratic process in the area?

My second question, Mr President: I have unofficial information that you will be in the country until next Tuesday and that you will visit some production areas in the country. If you visit us in Zulia, which is where I am from, you will be very welcome. [applause]

[Castro] I thank you very much for that invitation and I'm very honored. I did not know you were going to invite me. When you told me that I am going to be here until Tuesday, I was going to ask who will pay for it? [laughter]

In the second place, I....

[Balero, interrupting] Excuse me, when do you leave?

[Castro] I subscribe to the principle that it is better to leave 1 minute earlier than 1 minute later. I think that they won't be able to stand me here for more than 24 hours. [laughter] Especially with all the controversy that has occurred, with all the television reports that have been carried. I think that it's time the Venezuelans get a rest.

You had another question or you were going to say something else?

[Balero] When do you leave? [laughter]

[Castro] It's a secret. [applause] However, I will tell you that I will leave as soon as possible.

[Balero] I do not want you to think that I ask because I want you leave.

[Castro] No, I'm sure that's not the reason. Thank you very much.

You ask me about what I will do. We have been in all these places, not for presidents' meetings, but for inaugurations. Some people have asked me: If you're new [as heard], why do you attend? I simply tell them: Because I've been invited.

I used to not get invited. [laughter] This is a sign of the new times. The Ecuadoran president invited me. Then the Mexican president invited me. He invited me. He invited me. [repeats himself]

I think Carlos Andres' gesture was made at a high price. I jokingly asked Carlos Andres when I saw him in Quito: Are you going to invite me? [laughter] He did not say anything. He did not commit himself. [laughter] However, he invited me later. Then he wasn't the one with the problem; I had the problem. Should I go or not? I had to confront this problem in view of all the thunder and noise and all the controversy that broke out.

I asked Carlos Andres if he would invite me, just to make him nervous. What will he say to me, I wondered, if I don't go to the inauguration and I meet him again later at a meeting of the nonaligned countries or something like that? He'll ask me: What happened to you that you could not come? [Castro chuckles] I did not have much of an alternative. There was nothing else I could do but go, which I did with much pleasure.

These events that have occurred are symbols of the new times. If you like, I can give you another story about my meetings with Carlos Andres.

He told me: You've changed a lot. I told him: You've changed too. [laughter] Both of us have changed. [Castro chuckles] Someone asked me: Have the two of you changed? Are the two of you the same?

No, we have not changed. We are just more experienced. What is changing is our world and the continent we live in.

You ask how we can include ourselves in the process of democratic development. Well, we'll do whatever we can. What we really cannot do is export it. Some may say we cannot export it, because we don't have it. I say: We do not export it, because you cannot export revolution or democracy. That is a reality. I do not accept the theory that they can really be exported.

[Moderator] Ana Luisa Herrera now has the floor. She is from CNN Television Network and Telemundo.

[Herrera] Commander Castro, the charges made by several Cubans on violations of human rights in Cuba will be voted on again in Geneva in a few days. Last year, the vote was in Cuba's favor by a very small margin. This year, the issue will be voted on again. I would like to know what you can tell me about this, what you think, how it will be resolved. Also, with regard to human rights, I would like you to tell me why there are still political prisoners in Cuba. What can you tell me about the "plantados" who are still there? Also, why is it that when journalists go to Cuba, you have not allowed them to visit the Mando Negro Prison? I would also like you to answer for how long will Cuba continue giving advice to Nicaragua.

[Castro] Are you done? [laughter]

[Herrera] Yes.

[Castro] You don't have any more questions? Too bad! What a shame! The first question is....[rephrases] it was a long question. You can repeat them as we go along, can't you? You have written them down, right? [laughter]

[Herrera] No, what I have are other notes.

[Castro] What do you have?

[Herrera] The first question is on Geneva.

[Castro] On Geneva, that is right. I must inform you. First of all, I don't know if you were aware that this whole movement was organized by the United States. Do you, or do you not know that? Those were accusations made by the United States. It was something that actually became an obsession for President Reagan.

[Herrera] But the presentation of the accusations has been based on accusations made by hundreds and hundreds of Cuban exiles, and based on their experiences in prison.

[Castro] You can even say thousands. But I'll ask you a question. Has a single one of those accusations been proven? Has it been proven that Valladares was tortured? Did he (?do) the things he wrote in his book? What has been proven is that Valladares was a policeman for Batista. The documents are historical; they are irrefutable. Everyone in Cuba knows that. What has been proven is that Valladares was even given a job in the revolution when he no longer was a policeman. This was done so that no one would be unemployed. We didn't have a vindictive spirit. We didn't know that Valladares was a henchman, torturer, criminal. We thought he was merely a policeman in the Batista regime up to the last moment. Then we learned that 20,000 [as heard] people had died in the country. That is one thing. Valladares did not go to prison for political ideas. Valladares was in contact with the U.S. Embassy. He belonged to a counterrevolutionary group that was setting off bombs and carrying out acts of terrorism. All that was completely proven and he was sentenced for it.

I tell you this because he is the U.S. representative at the Human Rights Commission. Valladares pretended to be paralyzed. It is incredible. As a matter of fact, he even managed to lie to us. There was a campaign for this.

I asked one of our best specialists: Why don't you analyze this and see if there is a solution to this problem. We believed his medical condition. Then the doctor treated him and he informed me: He's faking; he's perfectly well. There's nothing wrong with him. I asked: How is this possible? He said: Look for a way to prove it.

We looked for a way to prove this. We used television to try and prove there was nothing wrong with him. We have the video of Valladares. We have distributed it. If you like, we will send you a copy so that you are well informed.

[Herrera] Can you tell me...

[Castro, interrupting] Wait, then ask your questions! Give me a chance to speak. [laughter] Is there no freedom of speech here or what? [laughter] [Castro chuckles] I will let you talk all you want and I will let you ask whatever you want, but allow me to finish my statement so that I can inform everyone else because this is what this is for.

Okay then, he would get up every day to do exercises. I saw him do exercises, calisthenics. He was one of the healthiest prisoners in the country. I am not that critical of him. You know that prisoners invent things to see how they can improve their situation or to (?amuse themselves). I did not even consider him that much to blame.

I remember when Mitterrand became insistent on this issue. It was being said that the situation was very difficult, that the papers of the right wing were undertaking a big campaign. They became interested in Valladares. If you like, we will send it to you, too.

When Valladares was told—the decision was made; we had the film—he was shown the film. Do you know what his reaction was? He instantly got up. [laughter] He, himself, no longer denied the lie! [applause] Do you know how Valladares left then? He left on his own two feet on an airplane. He went up the stairs; he went down the stairs. It is incredible that Valladares would deny this. He says the film is a fake.

It would be as if 10 years from now you took out the film that you're making today and I said: That's a lie. It was invented. I was not in Caracas. [laughter] I did not hold a news conference there.

That type of thing is inconceivable. That's how lies have been fabricated, like this. That applies to all those lies.

Ask a Cuban citizen, among millions of residents, if there is any torture there. Ask them if they know of a single case of torture, a single case. I'm not talking about 100, 50, 20, 10, or 5 cases of torture, just a single case there. The people of Cuba know this and the friends of Cuba know this. We have very many honorable friends in the world. They would not be our friends if this were true, if those false accusations were true.

Who are the people who make those false accusations against us? Who are the people who fight against apartheid, hunger, poverty in the world, injustice in the world, and colonialism? The enemies of the people are not the ones that fight against us. [sentence as heard] The people who make those accusations do not forgive our stance, which is that to fight and rebel against the empire is a worthy endeavor. They are the ones!

I think this is an insult to the many excellent friends we have in the world, the mere idea that we are torturers.

I met today with a large group of intellectuals. They told me that it was not 800 but 1,400 people who signed the declaration of welcome. I know that many complained that they were not advised.

Let's say that the people making those accusations are liars, charlatans, and friends of criminals, assassins, and torturers. Either they have not been in Cuba or they have invented that lie. Our people cannot be insulted like that. They are a people with a revolutionary culture and

awareness, educated by the revolution. The revolution itself instilled the principle that the physical integrity of people must be respected. There is no single case of execution by firing squad. Many of the Giron invaders are still very healthy there. They were mercenaries at the service of a foreign power that invaded the country. They are healthy and not a single one of them has ever said that he's been tortured and I saw....[changes thought] I can say something else: What dignity, what discipline our militia members showed. They did not kill a single one of them. They did not hit anyone with their rifle butts even though 72 hours of fierce combat took place. That is how our people conduct themselves.

Those accusations are an insult to our people. In addition, they are an insult to world public opinion because lying to world public opinion is an offense. If I tell you a lie, I'm insulting you. If I tell you lies, I'm insulting you and I'm showing you a lack of respect. [crowd applauds and chants: "Fidel! Fidel!"]

Excuse me, comrades, but I wonder why people need to be lied to—hundreds of millions, thousands of millions. Why does does the whole world need to be lied to? They confuse and they lie. I think we have been able to prove that the people's skin is thick; they have intuition, instinct.

Just think about the fact that the revolution has been terribly slandered for 30 years. I am talking about slander and not about a difference of opinion. Many things can be said. They can be antisocialist. They can talk about our mistakes in building socialism. However, I am talking about slander, one of the worst kinds of slander. After 30 years, and after the strong campaign against Cuba, it would have been impossible to visit this country. They were practically calls to violence against the visitor—even against a madman, should one appear. There are many ways of inducing actions.

Finally, what was the Venezuelans' reaction? I have been truly impressed. I think never before....[changes thought] It is one of the most extraordinary experiences that I have had. It is one of the most impressive things: their reaction. The reaction of the new generation of Venezuelans. Who are those hundreds of journalists interested in talking, greeting us everywhere? Are we bandits, admirers of criminals and torturers? I wonder [words indistinct] who didn't believe. Unfortunately, not everyone believed. Many did believe and were lied to. Who believed? Basically, those who were interested in believing all the things said. That is what I can tell you with regard to that type of slander against Cuba. [applause]

I will finish the Geneva issue and then I'll give you the floor again. The vote in Geneva was the year before last. You can't imagine the kinds of pressure the United States used. President Reagan would phone the members of the commission. The pressures the United States placed on Latin America! I think one of the most admirable things Latin America did was to keep up a united front; Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil abstained. They put such terrible pressure on the governments. It is incredible! We know it. It is a truth that has not been publicized but that is very well known. Despite that, they were not able to get the approval for an investigation. They were defeated. They tried it again the second year. There was great pressure. It is very difficult to fight pressure from the United States because all countries need something from the IMF, the World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank such as credit, food, markets. One has to be very courageous to challenge all that. But the countries gradually challenged it.

So, what did we do to find a solution? We, ourselves, invited the Human Rights Commission to visit the country, to talk with whomever it wanted, to visit prisons, everything, and to tour the country from one end to the other with absolute freedom. No one imposed this on us. If someone had imposed it, you can be certain that Cuba would have been visited by no one. You can be certain that Cuba is not inspected by anyone. But [words indistinct] international meetings, U.S. institutions that for many years have fought us. But we have nothing to hide. The only thing we do not have to accept are impositions. That is another matter.

Cuba is in the Human Rights Commission. It was elected by a large number of votes, because when votes are secret, many countries vote for Cuba. However, in the UN Human Rights Commission they discuss the public vote. No one can mark an "x" without the United States knowing about it. The country that got the most votes was Cuba when it was elected a member of the Human Rights Commission. The matter is more difficult when it is public; these are the reasons I repeat this to you. However, the U.S. position on all that is weakening, and I don't think....[changes thought] Last year, the United States became stubborn about that. I don't know what they will do this year, but we are frankly quite at ease. I do not think they will win that battle. However, if they do win a battle, it would be a Pyrrhic victory. They would not gain anything, nor would they harm, in the least, the moral of our people and our revolution.

Now we come to the second question. You shot your questions off one right after the other like a machinegun. Did you receive any training in this? [laughter] Okay, good, good. What's the second question? It was on political prisoners.

[Herrera] It was on political prisoners that....

[Castro, interrupting] Why are there political prisoners? I am going to ask you something. Have you ever been to Italy? Have you ever been to Italy? [repeats himself] Have you been there? I'm asking you. Have you ever visited Italy? Have you ever been to Spain or not? Have

you ever met with Felipe Gonzalez? Why don't you ask Felipe Gonzalez why there are political prisoners in Spain? Many Basques are prisoners because of activities against the Spanish state.

Many people are imprisoned in Italy for activities against the Italian state. The same thing applies to France.

How many Puerto Ricans are imprisoned for activities against the domination of the United States?

You ask us why we have to have counterrevolutionary prisoners. We used to have many during another period and they were well punished. What I can assure you of is that no injustices were committed.

We knew that the people are the ones who defend the revolution. It's very difficult to fight against the revolution because all the people cooperate. They join ranks with the revolution. This makes counterrevolutionary action difficult. However, when they went to the courts, we knew more than the counterrevolutionaries themselves knew. There are a lot less counterrevolutionary cases now. We knew more than they did. If they did not know what they did in January, on the 25th, if they could not remember, we knew. There were many people who belonged to the revolution who infiltrated the ranks of the counterrevolution precisely to (?prevent) violence and torture. We have never used these methods.

Our security organizations were very well developed because they used intelligence and not violence. When individuals were arrested, everything was known about them. They were demoralized when they were simply presented with all the evidence. How do you think we defeated the counterrevolution?

At first, there were about 300 counterrevolutionary organizations in Cuba. Imagine that! Sometimes three people would meet and set up an organization. All this was promoted by the CIA, by the United States. They also thought that the country could not resist, that it was a (?game), a children's game and that they could win glory, they would....[changes thought] The moment came when almost all the leaders of their organizations were our people. [laughter]

Our police worked well. They knew things. They knew everything. They asked us: Do we or don't we have the right to penalize someone who wants to commit, who does commit sabotage, who wants to carry out an attack, who is a U.S. spy?

Perhaps the people of Venezuela would reject this. If you had people doing this kind of thing, would you punish them or not? Would I have a right to come and ask the Venezuelan Government why they have prisoners?

They are called political prisoners to distinguish them from those who are thieves. There's even a legal, philosophical discussion that is recognized as political crime. Law students know this. In general, they say that when the motive is political....[changes thought] If someone wants to kill me, I wouldn't say that it is a common crime. The intention is not very pleasant to me but I would say it is a political crime because the motivation is political.

However, some of the more eminent lawyers say that one can only speak about political crimes when those who act against the state do so to improve the state. They do it to produce social changes. Those who fight against the state to make the state regress for reactionary reasons are not political criminals. That is the thesis of (Jimenez de Azua), one of the most brilliant Spanish lawyers. Nevertheless, we have never adopted that thesis.

We simply look at the motivation and if the motivation is political, the prisoner is political. We actually call him a counterrevolutionary but it's the same, more or less. They are the prisoners to whom you are referring. We had a lot of them. The activity decreased and there are very few of them left. I can't give you the exact number. It could be about 10 people. I don't think there are as many as 100 or more than 100.

We have even promised the release of many of the remaining prisoners through the U.S. church. They have to get visas for these prisoners to travel to the United States. Some of them are dangerous.

Now I would like to ask you a question. Did you know that Posada Cariles was in the Giron invasion? Did you know that as a traitor to the fatherland he could have gotten capital punishment and he only got 2 years in prison? You at least have heard that he came here to Venezuela and organized the attack against a Cuban plane. Our entire sports team, which had won all the gold medals, died in that accident. More than 70 people died. Everyone knows what happened. Everyone knows. The Venezuelan people know.

They know what Bosch did. Who is Bosch? He organized that attack. He even used Venezuelans to carry out this attack. The Venezuelans were arrested. Now he is completely free. He appeared somewhere in El Salvador. Look what he did. He left prison to go help the Nicaraguan counterrevolution from El Salvador. He helped in the dirty war. Many individuals get out of prison and they become militants of very bad causes in the world.

Do you think that if someone does what Posada Cariles did he should be punished? Is it fair to release him? We even released him once. How many of those Giron mercenaries that we freed committed crimes again, killed, murdered our people? You could consider the leaders of our party responsible for being generous with people who later killed our comrades. Nevertheless, we released them.

Then, what is being questioned? The right of our state to defend itself is being questioned. Why is it being questioned? Any state can defend itself. Nevertheless, if we defend ourselves, we are the evil ones. If we punish those who violate our revolutionary laws to try and destroy the revolution, we are the evil ones. Why? Why does this deception arise? Why are we measured with that yardstick? Its simply not fair.

I'm willing to answer all your questions. Tell me if there are any more but you will have to answer some questions I ask you, too. [laughter, applause] [camera shows Castro leaning back in his chair and is heard whispering to the moderator seated on his left: "Give the floor to someone else, now. (?There's no more)."]

[Herrera] There's one last question, commander. When will Cuba stop giving military assistance to Nicaragua?

[Castro] It's a crime.

[Herrera] I beg your pardon?

[Castro] It's a crime.

[Herrera] No, the question....

[Castro, interrupting] How many countries does the United States give military assistance to? [laughter] It gives aid to everyone. [applause] The United States has bases all over the world. [applause]

The country is being attacked. It is the victim of a dirty war that has cost it tens of thousands of lives. They began a revolution and they had no military experience. We gave them advisors. At one time, we had 100 people there, not troops, but teachers in the academies, instructors to train officials and sublieutenants. We had them there. I think it was a noble, just thing to do. It was a just cause.

We can say that the number will be largely cut when the Nicaraguans decide to do so. We cannot unilaterally decide this. Only the Nicaraguans can decide the day when they no longer need us, and when they tell us they don't need us, we will withdraw the few remaining advisers with pleasure.

I want you to know that there are many more doctors, health personnel, advisory personnel. I want you to know that during a certain period of time and with great sacrifice, 2,000 teachers held classes in the most remote areas of the country, in rural areas, in very difficult conditions.

The response expresses....[rewords] The concrete answer to the question is that we will immediately withdraw our advisers as soon as the Nicaraguans ask us to do so. We will not withdraw them if we are asked to do so by the United States. We do not obey orders from the United States. [applause]

Further on News Conference

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["Part 2" of news conference held by President Fidel Castro on 4 February in Caracas, Venezuela—recorded]

[Text] [Moderator] Okay, let's continue. Guillermo Rodriguez from Colombia's Radio Caracol now has the floor.

[Rodriguez] Good evening Commander. Caracol stands for Colombian Radio Network, not the other kind of caracol. [wordplay on "caracol," which means seashell and is also the acronym for Cadena Radial Colombiana, Colombian Radio Network]. [laughter, applause]

As you know Commander, Colombia is going through a very critical time. It is a country where, unfortunately, many things are collapsing. Unfortunately, your name is also abused in certain acts committed by irresponsible individuals who make reference to—if we mention the means—a pro-Castro guerrilla, which evidently has nothing to do with Fidel Castro or the Cuban Revolution. However, I do not doubt that given your respectability and the exemplary [word indistinct] you have in Latin America and the world, a word from you—as they say in the Catholic Church—would be enough to cure us, without considering it an act of magic. [laughter]

The other subject, which is closely linked to this, is the drug trafficking drama. President Perez made an in-depth observation today on a conference of Latin American presidents and said he did not agree with legalization. He even went further and proposed a world conference. Regrettably, in Colombia...

[Castro, interrupting] Please repeat the second part of the drug trafficking question and what Carlos Andres was proposing.

[Rodriguez] He was proposing a conference of Latin American presidents on [words indistinct]. I wanted to ask you if Cuba would be willing to attend. Also, what do you think of this? How should (?we) face the drama this problem represents, which has cost us many lives in Colombia.

Our affection to the Cuban Revolution, you, and your government. Thank you very much.

[Castro] Well, on... [changes thought] Don't leave, stay around here just in case I need to ask you something. [laughter] Look, I wish it was like that. If it was like that, it would be so much better. However, whoever believes that people who struggle or who have political motivations or revolutionary purposes would be so obedient to anyone's word.... [rephrases] Whoever assumes that, believes that. I do not think there is anyone in the world who has that power. Nor will anyone in the world ever have it, because it is impossible to simply heed such

orders. I know (?revolutionaries). They are very [word indistinct] and stubborn. If you ask something of him—you can ask him or order him—rest assured he will not obey you. If you ask him something of this nature, rest assured he will not pay attention to you.

I have seen them—the many international cables you are talking about—that constantly call one of the organizations the pro-Castro guerrillas—I don't know if it is the ELN [Popular Army of Liberation]. I imagine it must irritate them when the cables say the pro-Castro guerrillas. Nothing irritates an organization more than when it is made out to be a peon of another country or individual, or a person obedient to someone else.

At times there have even been kidnappings and relatives have approached (?us).... [rephrases] Whenever we have been able to do something about it, we have done it—in matters we know it can be done or asked for.

What I most hope for is that you can find peace. I say this sincerely. When I spoke with President Barco—every time I have met with him, in Quito and Mexico, I have had excellent conversations, but I couldn't talk to him here, just 5 minutes during lunch, and I said I regretted we couldn't talk more—I have expressed my desire that he be successful in his actions for peace. I truly hope that you can attain peace.

However, it would be almost ridiculous and it would also be useless for me to make a request of that nature. I think that would be openly interfering in an internal problem. However, if we can do something to contribute to that peace, be assured that we will not deny that contribution.

If you like, I can reveal something of a historic nature to you. I remember that we helped produce and organize, in conjunction with the Spanish Government, the meeting that was held when Belisario Betancur was president. It took place in Spain and its purpose was to attain a cease-fire, to attain peace.

I have never spoken about this before. I don't like to talk about this but I think it's something that proves what I'm telling you. If it's possible for us to do something, I'm certain we will do so. President Barco is familiar with our position.

In reference to the matter of drug trafficking, I think that it has become one of the greatest dramas of our times. It has truly become a tragedy for the Latin American people. It is also a tragedy for the United States. However, the U.S. is focusing on the wrong thing. They want to resolve the entire problem with insecticides... [corrects himself] with herbicides, with airplanes, with repression. They are not aware that the market that has emerged there has exported to the peoples of Latin America—to several peoples of Latin America—a very serious problem, because it has created drug production there.

It has been said that tens of thousands of hectares of drugs are raised in Latin America. This has been reported, although I can't guarantee the accuracy of these reports, but this has been repeated often. It is said that 70,000 hectares of drugs were raised in Bolivia. The cultivation of coca was even traditional for the population's consumption during pre-Colombian times.

Statistics indicate that 250,000 hectares of land are used for drug production in Peru. I'm amazed. We have more than 100,000 hectares of land dedicated to citrus production and I know what (?a task) citrus production is. I'm amazed that they have 250,000 square kilometers of coca plantations.

What happens is that a peasant who used to plant corn begins to plant coca or he plants [word indistinct]. It produces 10 times more than corn. A terrible problem is created. There are even countries whose income, the money that circulates in the parallel market, largely comes from drug trafficking. It has almost created an economic dependency. It is a very great tragedy. The consumption of drugs is increasing throughout societies. It is an additional illness. These are countries that have a terrible economic crisis.

I was recently discussing this with a U.S. legislator who is presiding over the committee against drug trafficking. Congressmen Rangel and others visited Cuba and I told them: You have to change your focus. You can't just be repressive. You have to analyze the reality of the objectives and find formulas that will help resolve these economic problems, or the governments will become powerless to end the problem. Millions of people are living like this. A very serious problem has been created. It is one of the serious and grave problems that merits the attention of leaders. It merits the attention of governors. I said that it is our duty to seek formulas because the mafias in some countries are threatening the integrity of the state. It has become a tremendous public problem.

We should create our own formulas, Latin American formulas. The formulas should not be exported to us by the people who exported the problem to us. We should demand that they fight the problem in their own land, that they draft stricter laws. They cannot resolve the problem just by applying repression in countries where the drugs are produced.

Drug trafficking is increasing. It is known that drug trafficking and production is increasing more each time. It is a business that involves hundreds of billions of dollars. I have heard that the drug industry at the world level circulates $500 billion a year. That is more than the foreign debt of Latin America. This has become a very serious problem.

I have discussed this with other leaders, with Presidents Raul Alfonsin and Virgilio Barco. They are aware of our willingness to cooperate in that fight. We do not have that problem, fortunately. We did not fall into this. This

did not happen after the triumph of the revolution. The cases of consumption of marijuana, which can be grown in a pot in any garden and is sanctioned by law, are very rare. Coca is practically unheard of in our country. We do not have that kind of problem. Our society is free of that, but we are willing to cooperate with everyone else. We are willing to cooperate with all the Latin American countries; if a meeting of leaders is called at the chief-of-state level, we are willing to participate. There is no doubt about this. Our country will cooperate in any way it can.

[Rodriguez] Thank you, you're very kind.

[Moderator] Fine. Now Desire Santos, from the Caracas newspaper ULTIMAS NOTICIAS and Radio Rumbos, has the floor.

[Castro] We are not talking about the last question but about the latest news, right? [wordplay on "ultima, which means last] [laughter]

[Moderator] ULTIMAS NOTICIAS, that is right.

[Santos] Good evening. Commander, returning to the subject of human rights, do you think Latin America has not expressed enough solidarity for Nelson Mandela? There was no reference to South Africa during this very important meeting in Caracas. So, what do you suggest that we Latin Americans do—now that we are on this wave of concerted action—to make our condemnation of apartheid more effective?

[Castro] I think that in Latin America there has not been a completely generalized awareness of the tragedy of apartheid. However, all Latin American countries that are part of the Nonaligned Movement have actively participated in the struggle and condemnation of apartheid. Recently, here in Venezuela, I had the honor of speaking with President Sarney. He had just made a trip to Angola and he told me that he has very strong, defined, and energetic positions against apartheid. I can even say that the Brazilian representative to the United Nations has had a very active, unified attitude with the nonaligned countries in everything related to UN Resolution 435, to prevent modifications to it. I understand that the governments who are members of the Nonaligned Movement have an active position in that. Of course, we cannot ask that the Government of Chile have an active position against apartheid, because it has many ideological affinities. [Words indistinct] situations, not everywhere, some governments that are very close to U.S. policy do not take action. However, the more responsible governments, the democratic governments of Latin America, have a good position on these problems. Venezuela has a good position. Colombia, Argentina, Brazil, Panama, Ecuador, and Peru, all those countries have very good positions and support the fight against apartheid.

Nelson Mandela has received a lot of international solidarity, in Europe and everywhere. We would have liked more solidarity. And anything we can do for it, to create an awareness of the need for that solidarity, we must do it. Really, I agree with you. I even thank you for bringing up that subject, which is also an expression of solidarity with the people of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, and the fight against apartheid.

[Moderator] Going in order, Fidel Eduardo Orozco now has the floor.

[Castro] What? [laughter]

[Moderator] Fidel Eduardo Orozco from the TRIBUNA POPULAR newspaper.

[Orozco] Comrade President, good evening. I also represent the university press for the Central University of Venezuela. I would say that your presence in Caracas has created a commotion, as you have been able to see. The community of the Central University has been moved so much that—it has been so embracing that—the temperature has exceeded the mark on the thermometer. That is why, before asking the question, I would like to convey a unified, fraternal, and affectionate greeting from the community of the Central University of Venezula—made up of students, teachers, [word indistinct], and employees—to the Cuban Revolution and to you.

[Castro] Thank you very much. (?Do) you have a question?

[Orozco] This is the question.

[Castro] Ah! There is a question. [laughter]

[Orozco] The nuclear disarmament agreements reached by the Soviet Union and the United States seem to indicate a more realistic and sincere will to preserve humanity from the nuclear [word indistinct]. Comrade President, would you say that that new climate of international detente could also be applied to Central America and the Caribbean?

[Castro] In reality, in reality [repeats himself] these are two very different problems; one is a global problem, and the other is a regional problem. There is no doubt that there is a greater awareness in the world about the dangers of nuclear war and nuclear weapons. The great powers are interested in this matter. It is a problem that cannot be compared to the other. I think great progress has been made and that this is one of the most important advances that has been made in the last few years. Small steps may still be taken. There are still tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in the world. There are thousands of nuclear carriers in the world, both tactical and strategic. A small step has been taken.

The road is still long before we reach our destination, which is disarmament, the total elimination of nuclear weapons. No country should have nuclear weapons. That's our position. All nuclear weapons should be eliminated. That should be the final objective. It is encouraging that a few first steps have been made in this direction.

I think that the country most capable of helping to resolve the problems in Central America is the United States, not the Soviet Union. I discussed this a lot with Arias. Arias argued that this is a East-West problem. He said that the Soviet Union could help resolve the problem in Central America, in El Salvador. I explained to him that the Soviet Union has had absolutely nothing to do with the problems in El Salvador. The Soviet Union had absolutely nothing to do with the revolution in Nicaragua, just as it had nothing to do with the Cuban Revolution.

We received cooperation and assistance after the triumph of the revolution, but we did not know a single Soviet citizen when we were fighting in the Sierra Maestra. The exact same thing applies to the Nicaraguans.

The problem in El Salvador is absolutely indigenous. This is one of the things that I said to President Arias. I told him about this with much sincerity.

The country that can do the most is the United States. I was stating here the hope that the new U.S. Administration will adopt a more flexible, pragmatic position because its policy is a failure and it will continue to be a failure as long as it seeks military solutions in Nicaragua and El Salvador. It could do more; we should demand that the United States do more and we should work so that more is done.

I think that international detente helps. I am sure that the Soviets want this. If they can help, they will. They have said this. They have called on the United States many times to find political solutions. I am sure that the USSR will not refuse to give any cooperation to any possibility of peace in Central America.

[Orozco] Mr President, there was a great commotion at the Caracas Hilton Hotel yesterday because of a 9-year-old girl named (Esmanuel).

[Castro] Yes, her name is (Esmanuel).

[Orozco] Her name is (Esmanuel Tinof Garcia). She sat in the lobby of the Caracas Hilton Hotel for 9 hours, from 1200 to 2100, waiting for you, to welcome you and to ask you for an autograph. The little girl, according to the journalists who were there at the time, wrote the following letter:

Dear Fidel: I have been waiting for you for 9 hours at the hotel entrance, but you haven't arrived. My name is (Esmanuel) and I am 9 years old. I am in the fifth grade and I have acted in the theater. I wanted to meet you because I admire you very much and I admire your revolution. I wanted to go to your country to meet you and give you an embrace, but they tell me that it's impossible. I am giving you my phone number so that you can call me. [laughter] You can write to me at: (Esmanuel Tinof Garcia), Apartado 17671, Caracas, 1015-A. I also would like your autograph. I love you very much...

[Castro, interrupting] Thank you.

[Orozco] Please call me, (Esmanuel). [laughter]

[Castro] Okay.

[Orozco] I wanted to ask you, Comrade President, what do you think of a 9-year-old girl taking this attitude without anyone telling her to do so? She did this spontaneously and she was persistent. We journalists witnessed this ourselves yesterday.

[Castro] I first heard about the girl from some comrades who saw it on television and told me about it. That same day, later in the afternoon, I had a meeting here. However, the journalist who interviewed me yesterday morning told me about this. I had not seen the letter. So, I sent the girl a little message and I invited her to go to Cuba. I did not know if she wanted to go to Cuba, but I invited her [words indistinct]. Later in the evening, I got a copy of the letter. Well, what can I tell you? It is really moving. It impressed me a lot. It encourages my faith in the people.

[Moderator] Fine, we will now give Rogelio Garcia Lupo, from the Buenos Aires magazine EL PERIODISTA, his turn.

[Garcia Lupo] Good evening.

[Castro] Good evening.

[Garcia Lupo] Yesterday, a group of heads of state sent Argentine President Raul Alfonsin a message of solidarity from Caracas because of the political crisis in Argentina caused by the attack on a barracks. This is the question: Have you sent President Alfonsin a personal message for this reason?

[Castro] Yes. I have sent more than one personal message. Also, when President Perez spoke to me about this, I told him that I agreed with and supported the message that was being sent on behalf of the presidents who were here. I do not know if everyone's name appeared on it. Since I had not been to the meeting, Carlos Andres told me that he had represented me there. When he consulted me on this, I told him that I agreed completely with the idea of sending a message to President Alfonsin. I have not seen it, I really don't know what it says, but I did express my desire that the message be sent.

[Garcia Lupo] The list that was published omitted Cuba as one of the (?signatories).

[Castro] What?

[Garcia Lupo] A list of signatories was published and Cuba was not on it.

[Castro] And what countries were on it?

[Garcia Lupo] Cuba, Nicaragua, and Panama were not on it. The other countries were on it.

[Castro] Were those the ones that were at the 1100 meeting?

[Garcia Lupo] Yes.

[Castro] Is that the meeting where I spoke? It is a shame that Cuba did not appear on it, because we had agreed on that. But that is what happened. However, I express my solidarity with the message to President Alfonsin. The events that have taken place there have really been unfortunate. I think they have damaged the democratic process in Argentina, because the arguments of the most reactionary forces in the country have been favored. I do not have enough information to know the motives. However, whatever the motives were, I think what happened there was a great mistake. I do not vacillate in expressing my opinion publicly.

Whenever there have been problems, the first thing I have done has been to send a message [word indistinct]. A message was sent to President Alfonsin expressing our solidarity and encouraging him. I regret that one of the consequences of that fact has been that Alfonsin could not be present in Caracas. I really wanted him to come, because the last time we met, in Mexico, we spoke of the possibility of... [rephrases] taking advantage of the inauguration to hold an extensive meeting of Latin American heads of state. Unfortunately, he could not come. I regretted this very much because I wanted this inauguration to be well-attended. I wanted as many Latin American presidents as possible to be present. I was sorry that the Mexican president could not attend and I was truly very sorry that President Raul Alfonsin, who has attended all ceremonies of this type, was not able to be present on this day. That's what I feel. Is there something else you'd like to know?

[Garcia Lupo] No, thank you.

[Castro] This is enough?

[Garcia Lupo] Yes, it's sufficient. Thank you.

[Moderator] Ted Cordoba of the (ORBITA BID) press agency of Bolivia, Peru, and Venezuela now has the floor.

[Castro] [Words indistinct] a question.

[Moderator] [Words indistinct] on the 12th.

[Castro] (?On) the 12th?

[Cordoba] Yes, I am going back to the topic of your reunion with Venezuelan society after 30 years. That is my first question. My second question pertains to Cuba's internal situation.

As you are aware, there has been an almost paranoid campaign because of the (?artistic license) that naturally exists in the press within the framework of freedom of expression in Venezuela. There have been actual attacks. I think I am speaking for many Venezuelan and international colleagues when I criticize the attacks that have been made through electronic means, such as "Fidel equals AIDS" and other similar remarks.

You have been here for 3 days and you have seen the important factors in Venezuelan society, which has had democracy for 3 decades. My first question is: Would you give me your impression of the state in which this democratic society finds itself?

The second question is: What is Cuba's position in the world scene?

I clearly understand your explanation on perestroyka and the differences that exist between the process in the Soviet Union and the one in Cuba. I began to understand this in Quito and I will not comment much on this again.

I have one doubt, however. What will Cuba's model be for the year 2000 in this world where there is a true electronic revolution, where development is based on the microchip, where the world is a global village because communications have made it a small world, where commercial blocks group together in a certain way, where the three most important emerging economic powers—Japan, Germany, and Italy—are the ones who lost World War II?

[Castro] In the first place, my impression of Venezuela is truly unforgettable. I have received many impressions in my life, but I will never forget two of them, which were very big, very big [repeats himself].

The first impression was when I came to Venezuela 30 years ago. It was easier then. The war was ending. We came to thank the Venezuelans for their help, their solidarity, which was evident when they sent us weapons at a certain time. Venezuela was the only country to do this. They did it officially. It was done by the government.

In the Sierra Maestra—I think it was in November—they even sent me an automatic weapon. I think I've spoken of this before.

My first impression was after the war. There was a lot of political solidarity and I received a grandiose welcome. I could not have imagined such a thing. It was a great ceremony; some say it was one of the largest ones.

Since then 30 years have passed. My trip now is under different, very difficult conditions because of the things that I have explained and because of the things you have said. I do not want to repeat ideas that I have said in other places.

If this event was in Miami, New York, or Washington, I would not have gone and I would not have regretted it. However, to not be able to visit a brother country in Latin America, like Venezuela, was inconceivable to me. All this created the problem of a great internal resistance that I had to overcome. You can't imagine the argument I had to use to try to convince and persuade the comrades to make the trip, because they resisted this almost unanimously.

I had to say: But comrade, the situation we faced last year was worse. There were 50,000 men in Angola who faced the South Africans under difficult conditions. I said: We had to make an effort of that nature. We had to reinforce our troops. So many men were running a risk, defending a just cause. How can we resign ourselves to the idea that just because there may be some physical danger, we should not go to Venezuela?

I think this was a very strong argument. You cannot prevent me, impede me from making this trip. I said: What will all those people think who defended the idea, who wrote the letter, the people who want the visit to occur?

I spoke to many Venezuelans who recently visited Cuba to mark the 30th anniversary of the revolution. I said: How can we disappoint them?

We knew there were threats, movements, and other things. We all were aware of the potential risks, but we decided to come.

There was a very important element, however. I had complete, absolute, total confidence in the citizens, in the people, and that is what truly interested me.

I have seen that confidence and that faith rewarded, very well rewarded. That is why I say I will have two more unforgettable impressions among the great impressions in my life.

One was on 23 January when we arrived from the Sierra Maestra at the end of the war. We had little experience and we were full of great desires. We came under those conditions. I will never forget this, and there is no paradox when I say I am more impressed by the people of Venezuela now. I will leave under these conditions full of admiration.

Above all, I have seen the young people. At the meeting with journalists I did not have much of an opportunity, but their attitude, their reaction, impressed me. It seemed incredible to me that they, the immense majority, had not been born when I came to Venezuela for the first time, 30 years ago. I was impressed by the talent, spirit, commitment, energy, dynamism, skill, and decency of those youths.

This trip was much more difficult. It was an unknown. There were many unknown things.

I received an even greater impression this time. This time I feel even more gratitude to the people of Venezuela and I doubt that in my life I will ever experience something like it again, and I have had some experiences. There have been other moments, such as the triumph of the revolution. There has been more than one occasion, but I tell you with all honesty, with all frankness that it may be a... [changes thought] It is very doubtful that I will receive another impression like this again. That is my response to your question. [applause]

[Moderator] Is there something else?

[Castro] Wait, wait.

[Cordova] How will Cuba fit into the plans for the year 2000 with the changes that have...

[Castro] Oh, yes, what model will Cuba use? That's something that is very important, the Cuban model. [laughter] That is the model that we are conceiving. Our experience has taught us to think with our own heads, and we don't pretend to create a model for everyone else. It's just for us, based on our history and characteristics. That is what we are working on, what we are conceiving for the year 2000.

[Cordova] Thank you.

[Castro] I think many questions have been repeated and the worst thing that can happen in a news conference is that the people get bored. This cannot be infinite. It cannot be endless. I don't know how many questions you have but it can be unusually long, endless.

[Cordova] [Words indistinct]

[Castro] This has lasted 2 and ½ hours now. Why don't you ask the distinguished public for their opinion?.

[Cordova] Then you think...

[Castro, interrupting] Well, I'm not the only one who should think. I'll be accused of being a dictator and of [words indistinct, interrupted by laughter]. I'll be accused of many things. I want you to understand. I want you to be convinced. It is possible that the phenomenon

where you get tired and bored may not occur. You should let us know. [crowd shouts: "No! No!"] You're doing this out of courtesy. [laughter]

[Moderator] The last turn is for journalist Manuel Felipe Sierra from the Caracas magazine VIERNES. Before he asks his question, I have been asked to inform you that ½ hour after the conference ends, a typed version of the interview will be available for your work.

[Castro] Where did you get such efficient people? [laughter]

[Moderator] No, I didn't get them. They came from the (?organizations).

[Castro] Are they Cuban stenographers? [laughter]

[Moderator] They are from the office of...

[Castro, interrupting] I can imagine the kinds of things that come out. I have seen when they make those typed versions; they are in a hurry, and there are always some errors. That is okay.

[Moderator] Manuel Felipe Sierra? Well, if he is not here, the next turn will go to Norma Rivero from the Caracas Radio Capital.

[Rivero] Good evening Commander.

[Castro] Good evening.

[Rivero] And once again, welcome. Could it be said that your visit to Caracas could mean an opening in the resumption of relations between Venezuela and Cuba? And, are there plans to reopen the embassy within the next few months?

[Castro] Well, it is obvious and elementary that we will establish as soon as possible our embassy in Caracas. Joking about this, I had said that we may need a credit to open it up—and this was only a joke. But any sacrifice... [rephrases] We are not opening embassies, we are actually trying to reduce their number. But this one is essential. As soon as it is possible, we will establish the diplomatic office and name an ambassador. Our relations have not been broken. There was a cooling down, for reasons that are known, but Venezuela maintained its diplomatic representation and its embassy in Havana the whole time.

[Rivero] Why is it essential for the government to resume relations so quickly?

[Castro] It is basic courtesy. It would have been a completely abnormal situation for just us to continue having a Venezuelan Embassy, after relations between the two countries have improved—after this visit—relations with the Government and people of Venezuela. So, we must get out of an anomalous situation and quickly establish Cuba's diplomatic headquarters in Caracas. [applause]

[Rivero] Secondly, I would like to know about the situation... [rephrases] the health policy of the Cuban Government on AIDS, which is one of the calamities attacking all societies of the world?

[Castro] (?It) attacks?

[Rivero] All the countries of the world, it is [word indistinct].

[Castro] Fortunately, (?we) are one of the countries that is doing better with AIDS, because we discovered it in time.

[Riveros] But it is said that the soldiers coming from Angola have been contaminated with AIDS.

[Castro] That is an exaggeration. There are some. However, when we investigated the first few cases of AIDS in our country, we found that they had originated from the West. They had nothing to do with the soldiers returning from Angola. A small number of them were, in fact, contaminated with it. It seems some people think that our men (?have been) there 10 years. No, our men there rotate—300,000 Cubans have been in the Armed Forces, just in the Armed Forces. This does not include the civilian collaborators. Well, our soldiers are disciplined. However, love is love [laughter] and it is difficult to discipline 100 percent of them. This is especially difficult when you are dealing with young men. Despite the fact that they are briefed and are urged to be careful, we have had a few cases. However, it is not a problem. When we discovered the first few cases, we followed up on them, which is normal, in order to take measures and to find out if there were other contaminated cases. I don't know if we have approximately 200 cases, after having tested millions of people. We tested, especially, the risk cases. Risk cases are those who have more dealings with foreigners, those who have been abroad. We do a systematic analysis, a blood test, of those who go into the hospitals. The number is very low. We have applied a practice which is possible because of the low number. This cannot be practiced in Europe or the United States. We have established sanatoriums for the virus carriers—as has been historically done. Those are the measures we have taken.

It can be said that we have totally halted the epidemic. We have reduced it to the lowest possible level. I think that we have won the battle against AIDS. In addition, all blood donations are examined systematically through modern equipment that we have manufactured, through reagents we have produced in Cuba. We are able and want to conduct a massive test. We can do this through a large cooperation movement on the part of the population.

In other countries, unfortunately, AIDS has spread extensively. There are some countries that have hundreds of thousands of carriers. Others have tens of thousands of carriers. It is very difficult to control this. If you have 10,000 carriers, you cannot isolate 10,000 people. In practice, it is impossible to isolate several thousand people. We not only isolate them, we give them permanent care. They are well fed. We also try to give them preventative care so that they do not get ill, because not all carriers get ill right away. It takes a few years. However, if you take preventative measures, if you keep him in good health... [changes thought] Many times, the disease becomes active in the carrier because he catches the flu, he has pneumonia, or he has some other disease that is the result of AIDS. We treat these carriers in order to keep them healthy. This gives us time until a treatment for the illness can be developed. That is what we are doing, and in this way we have been able to confront the problem.

Our country has experience in matters of epidemics. There is great cooperation on the part of the population; that is essential, and it has helped us in controlling the disease. I can assure you that from our point of view, the problem of AIDS in Cuba is a battle that has practically been won.

[Rivero] Thank you.

[Moderator] Distinguished colleagues... [interrupted by applause] We have been here for more than 2 and ½ hours. The list of journalists who want to ask questions is interminable. We hope that everyone will understand that the news conference has been long enough. Thank you.

Merger of Two Human Rights Groups Reported

FL0902122589 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Two Cuban human rights groups say they will join forces because of what they term official repression. The Cuban Commission of Human Rights and National Reconciliation and the Human Rights Party announced at a news conference in Havana yesterday that they are merging. The groups have not been officially recognized by the Cuban Government.

Bermuda

Voters Go to Polls for General Election

FL0902155589 Bridgetown CANA in English 1543 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Hamilton, Bermuda, Feb 9, CANA—An unseasonally warm spell of weather, which has sent temperatures soaring into the high 70's for the past month, broke this morning, bringing rain as voters went to the polls for a general election for the third in only six years.

Showers were forecast throughout the day, and political observers say the drizzles will help the United Bermuda Party (UBP) of Premier John Swan, who is trying for an unprecedented third election win.

Despite the rain, polling was steady early on, when UBP supporters traditionally vote in large numbers the opposition does better later in the day. [sentence as received]

The UBP is expected to retain power, having won the past six general elections. But the main opposition party, the Progressive Labour Party, is also expected to recapture some of the seven seats it lost in the general election in 1985. Then, the UBP won by a landslide, taking 31 seats in the 40-member House of Assembly, after dissidents split from the PLP to form the National Liberal Party, and took two seats.

Fredrick Wade, a lawyer who took over leadership of the PLP after the 1985 defeat, was spending the morning in his Devonshire North Constituency before embarking on a whirlwind tour of polling stations across this British island colony.

Swan will spend the day greeting voters at his Paget East Constituency polling station before going to his party's election headquarters after his own result is declared. He is scheduled to record interviews during the day for broadcast on the evening newscast of European television stations.

Voting for Bermuda's 31,162 electorate is confined to a short period of the day by the standards of other countries, with polling stations closing at 7 PM Atlantic time.

The first results are expected at around 8.30 P.M. (0130 GMT) and Swan and Wade should know their futures by 11 P.M.

Swan Wins; Ministers Defeated

FL1002040289 Bridgetown CANA in English 0355 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Text] Hamilton, Bermuda, Feb 9, CANA—With three-quarters of the seats counted in Bermuda's general election Thursday, Premier John Swan looked certain to retain power but with a vastly reduced majority.

Swan's United Bermuda Party had 19 of the 21 seats it needs for a majority in the House of Assembly but he was reeling from some spectacular defeats for cabinet ministers around the island. Three had lost their seats already and a fourth retained his by only 19 votes.

The most embarrassing loss was of the deputy premier of the past eight years, Dr Clarence James who was finance minister in the three previous Swan administrations.

James came a dismal fourth and last place as environmentalist Steward Heywood became the first independent candidate to win a seat in Parliament since party politics began with the granting of a constitution by Britain in 1968.

Other cabinet ministers defeated so far are Sports Minister Maxwell Burgess and Culture Minister Bobby Barrett.

The remainder of the results were expected late Thrusday night.

Haiti

Government Averts Strike; Leaders Arrested

FL0902122689 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] The Haitian Government has managed to avert a planned 48-hour nationwide strike. The action was to have started yesterday but things quieted down when the government announced a paid holiday. Meanwhile, police have been searching for opposition leaders who called for the strike against Haitian leader Prosper Avril and at least two have been arrested so far, without warrants.

Political Leaders Arrested, Others Sought

FL0902165489 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Excerpts] Rockefeller Guerre [president of the Union of Democratic Patriots] and (Sylvan Jolibois), whom the police arrested Monday [6 February] in connection with the explosion of a bomb on Sunday, 5 February, are supposed to appear in court later today, 9 February.

We remind listeners of the communique put out by the police in this regard.

The Port-au-Prince police informed the public that on Monday, 6 February 1989, it arrested Rockefeller Guerre and (Sylvain Jolibois). This arrest was in connection with a criminal explosion, the explosion of a bomb in the Champ de Mars area on Sunday 5 February.

Within the framework of the investigation into this matter, also being sought are: (Idli Cameau), Jean Auguste Mesyeux, Gabriel Miracle, (Noe Jean Jeanty), (Marc Aurel Henry), Jean Robert Champagne, and Eddy Volel. All these people are denounced as having participated in this terrorist act, which was supposed to be the first of a series of acts against public security and which could have caused deaths on the occasion of the Carnival festivities.

The people in jail will be taken to court within the deadline prescribed by law.

The communique is signed, for the Port-au-Prince police, by Marie Alix Rene, executive officer in charge of public relations.

In connection with this arrest, diverse organizations and simple citizens, some of whom are lawyers, have stated that they find that in this particular case, the police acted very fast—considering that for the past 3 years they have been crying out for help against the macoutes, who are doing everything in Haiti, such as committing murder and organizing massacres like the 29 November and 11 November massacres. Yet the police have never been able to discover the slightest trace of those macoutes, despite the fact that the macoutes have been named. And yet here, within a few hours, the police had time to discover that these men were setting a bomb on the Champ de Mars with the intention of killing people during the Carnival festivities.

And the police are seeking other people, among them Eddy Volel, who denies the police accusations against two RDC [Christian Democratic Assembly] members and several unionists. RDC President Volel denies the police accusations against himself and RDC secretary (Noe Jean Jeanty). He thinks the Avril government has adopted the maneuver of denouncing plots, which was used under Papa Doc, Francois Duvalier. Volel says he has always waged a peaceful struggle and that he would never have gotten involved in any bomb affair. Furthermore, says Volel, he knows that (Idli Cameau) and the CATH [Autonomous Organization of Haitian Workers] men [Mesyeux and Miracle] would not have prepared such a plot. He also says he has never heard of a Robert Champagne, who is mentioned in the police communique.

Volel again calls for the military government to resign. He maintains his call for a strike and says he will continue to struggle to get Prosper Avril—whom he says was too involved in crooked matters under the former dictatorship—to resign.

[Begin recording] [Volel] Regarding this business of a bomb that (?the communique) says was found under the stand [preceding word in English], only (?he) knows where it came from. His thing is so false that he even went and took the names of people who are no longer in the RDC and then said that these people too are being sought.

[Reporter] Who are you talking about, exactly?

[Volel] I beg your pardon?

[Reporter] Who, exactly?

[Volel] Well, (?he) mentioned a (Marc Aurel Henry). First of all, there is no (Marc Aurel Henry). There was a (Marc Aurel), who was an RDC member but who is no longer an RDC member—a man we booted out of the RDC for serious indiscipline. But his last name is not (Henry). [passage omitted]

We have always said that we were waging a peaceful struggle. Furthermore, we have never threatened anyone and we have never touched anything at all connected with explosives. It is Prosper Avril and the tonton macoute groups who have explosives and who go around killing people all night long. There are explosives under the palace and at the barracks. That's where the explosives are!

[Reporter] So, does this mean that you are presently in hiding?

[Volel] Me? Well, I can't say I am and I can't say I'm not. However, since those people are a group of criminals, I am not going to confront criminals who have weapons, because I will never forget how they killed my brother Yves. You know this is their specialty. When they need to do something, they offer any old lie and commit any old crime, and they are always in the right. You know that they are specialists at committing cowardly acts against an unarmed population, you know what I mean? So we are not giving them a chance to kill or arrest any democrat. And we are still complaining about their arbitrary arrest of Rockefeller Guerre and (Sylvain Jolibois). [passage omitted]

We of the RDC did not put out tracts for this strike. We issued a signed message—so we weren't doing anything under the table. We were the first to call for a strike, on 27 January. It is unfortunate that the other political parties, in order to (?increase their popularity), called for a strike on 8 February instead of supporting the RDC's call for a strike on 9 February. But in any case, we see that the population responded to the call for a strike, which is a vote of no-confidence for the Avril government, and that in this way the Haitian people are asking Prosper Avril to resign peacefully.

So, let him not come and create disorder. Let him not come and say that there is an invasion along the border and that he is going to repel it. Let him not come and say that bombs are exploding in Port-au-Prince, you know what I mean? Remember, under Francois Duvalier bombs exploded in both [word indistinct] and Ruelle Berne. They were in the habit of doing that and then accusing other people of doing it. Well, he is doing the same old thing.

So, we maintain our call for a strike on 9 February, as a vote of no-confidence in Prosper Avril. We ask him to peacefully go away, to resign as the de facto president of Haiti, which is what he currently is. If the government refuses to listen and resign, we will use all possible peaceful means until Prosper Avril understands that he is not in his rightful place, that the Haitian people do not want him to organize elections. [passage omitted]

Maybe Prosper Avril uses bombs and pots and pans, but we of the RDC don't use things like that. [end recording]

We remind listeners that Eddy Volel's brother Yves was murdered on 13 October 1987 at mid-morning, in broad daylight, in front of the police station in Port-au-Prince, but the police saw nothing. To this day the police have not found the slightest trace of the criminals who murdered Yves Volel in front of their headquarters. Lafontant Joseph was also murdered and the police have never found the slightest trace of the criminals—nor have they found the slightest trace of the criminals who murdered Louis Eugene Athis in (Opak); nor of the people responsible for the massacres in Labadie, (Danty), or Jean-Rabel, nor of any of the other killings that have been making the Haitian people suffer since 7 February 1986.

Police Prevent Demonstration in Gonaives

FL0902212189 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] The call to strike has caused a certain slowdown in activity in Port-au-Prince. Schools did not open today. This is the sector most affected. This is also true in the provinces, where public transportation is also affected. These two sectors are the sectors most affected by the strike.

While waiting to hear from our reporters in the streets of Port-au-Prince, we will see what is happening in Gonaives, where tires were burning this morning in the underprivileged neighborhoods and where public transportation was paralyzed. There was a demonstration scheduled, but it did not take place. Here is [Gonaives correspondent] Fegerson Legros.

[Legros] In Gonaives, as everyone knows, there was to have been a big demonstration this morning. This demonstration did not take place, because heavy, heavy pressure was brought to bear upon the population.

The police, wherever they saw tires burning, forced whoever was passing by to thoroughly put out the tires. People received many blows.

The population is not too happy about this. They are crying out against this and are saying that it is time there was an end to this kind of criminal action in Haiti. They are mad as hell, but there is not any kind of street demonstration going on at present.

We have noticed that the police put out the fires, but the minute they move on, the people light them up again.

Our colleague (Ediles Exil Woel), who works for Radio Cacique and Radio Transartibonite, was also pressured. They seized his tape recorder and (?tried to) force him to (?turn over his interview tape). They seized his card. Also, the policeman who did this finally returned these things to him in a humiliating manner.

We journalists here ask if this policeman acted this way under orders from the commanding officer. We find this action criminal, because it constitutes an attempt to muzzle us and to prevent us from doing our work properly.

In any case, we ask the commanding officer to state his position on this, because if our colleage (Ediles Exil Woel) had not obeyed the policeman's orders, he would now be all beaten up or dead in the morgue at the hospital.

Also, we can tell you that the population is angry but there is no demonstration in the streets, as had been scheduled. Things are very hot in Gonaives. [passage omitted]

Many people were beaten this morning as they apparently prepared to demonstrate.

We are on the scene and following events. This is Fegerson Legros, reporting for Metropole.

Jamaica

Coverage of Election Results, Incidents

Some Violence, Fraud Reported

FL0902161189 Bridgetown CANA in English 1605 GMT 9 Feb 89

[By Paget de Freitas]

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Scattered incidents of violence, fraud and administrative hitches plagued early polling, as Jamaicans voted Thursday in general elections.

Electoral officials reported unconfirmed incidents of "mobs taking over polling stations," of ballot boxes being hijacked and of stations opening late. Radio reports said one man was shot in the capital, Kingston.

Early voters at some Kingston stations waited in vain for the stations to open, but electoral officials told CANA this hitch would be resolved before noon.

Just over a million people are eligible to cast ballots in the elections, putting Prime Minister Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) against Micheal Manley's Peoples' National Party (PNP) for the 60 seats in the House of Representatives. Four independents are also contesting the election.

Opinion polls conducted by Jamaica's leading pollster, Professor Carl Stone give the PNP a 14 point lead in support, and it was a confident Manley who cast his vote early Thursday in the East St Andrew Constituency.

"I slept like a baby last night," Manley told reporters after voting.

Close to 10,000 police and soldiers have been deployed across the island to prevent political violence from escalating in Jamaica's first contested national election since 1980, when some 700 people were killed. The current death toll was last given as 10.

At some centres Thursday morning, voting began later than the scheduled 7:00 am, because either officials or equipment failed to arrive on time.

At one station visited by this correspondent, large knots of people milled about waiting for officials of two polling divisions to arrive, while scores of others were able to cast their ballots at those stations operating.

"There is a little problem here because two presiding officers have not yet arrived," one harried official said.

Manley also told reporters that he had filed a complaint of a lack of identification ink in the Central Kingston Constituency. Voters were leaving after casting their ballots without their fingers marked with ink.

In the East Kingston and Port Royal Constituency, where Manley himself is the candidate, four men pretending to be Manley supporters, took over a polling division and cast an estimated 70 ballots, sources say, for his opponents.

Polling officials told radio reporters that four men wearing t-shirts bearing Manley photographs entered the division, took the ballots and began marking them.

'Calm' Despite Early Problems

FL0902172189 Bridgetown CANA in English 1642 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Excerpts] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—One woman was shot dead and three men injured in seperate shooting incidents, as Jamaicans voted Thursday in general elections expected to see opposition leaders Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP) oust Prime Minister Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). Police confirmed the Kingston killing, but said the circumstances were still unclear.

Police had earlier said that three persons were shot and wounded early Thursday before polling began. Two men were shot and wounded in St Catherine, a parish west of the capital and another in eastern Kingston.

Close to 10,000 police and soldiers have been deployed across the island to prevent an escalation of political violence in Jamaica's first contested national election since 1980, when some 700 people were killed. The current death toll was last given as 11. [passage omitted]

After leading a group of supporters through central Kingston, Manley said he had seen some instances of voter intimidation at polling places in Seaga strongholds.

But he said the atmosphere was peaceful overall. "Obviously the security forces are doing a very good job," he told reporters before voting.

Police on Wednesday searched the home of Seaga's close aide and junior culture minister, Mike Henry and said they found 30 rounds of ammunition in an out house. Most of the ammunition was for a 12-guage shot gun.

The JLP had issued a statement saying that the search of Henry's premises in the south central parish of Clarendon was politically-motivated. The party also suggested that the ammunition was planted.

Despite the early election problems most of Jamaica remained calm Thursday, with many people wearing blue or flying tassles indicating their commitment to peace. Private sector groups had called for the wearing of blue. The JLP's colour is green and the PNP's orange.

Voting 'Brisk'; Shooting Cited

FL0902215089 Bridgetown CANA in English 2111 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—A pregnant woman was shot dead Thursday as isolated incidents of violence hit Jamaica, voting in general elections.

Police identified the woman as Glenna Williams, a 25 year old resident of Kingston. The woman, reported to be four months pregnant, was shot dead near a polling station in a slum district in the volatile western section of the city. There were conflicting reports as to who was responsible for the shooting.

The police said the woman was shot by unidentified gunmen during a clash between rival political groups in Kingston. But witnesses claimed the woman was shot by the police as they attempted to quell the disturbance. The police also reported that at least three other men were injured in separate shooting incidents.

Despite the violence, administrative snags and attempts at fraud, voting was brisk in the general election that is expected to see opposition leader Michael Manley's People's National Party oust the Jamaica Labour Party of Edward Seaga. Electoral officials and radio reports indicate that most of the problems were in Kingston.

Several polling stations had a delayed opening because of the late arrival of electoral officials and equipment, but officials expected all the hitches to be ironed out by midday.

There were also at least two reports of attempted stealing of ballot boxes and a few incidents of open voting. The police said one man snatched a ballot box and headed out of a polling station. But he was chased and the box retrieved. There was also a report of ballot stuffing in the East Kingston and Port Royal Constituency being contested by opposition PNP leader, Manley. Poll clerks at one station said four men, pretending to be Manley supporters, went to the station and marked 70 ballots for Manley's opponent.

The American Cable News Network [CNN] also reported Thursday a confrontation between its crews covering the election and Seaga. A CNN correspondent told his station that they had been filming a conversation between Seaga and an electoral official in his West Kingston Constituency when the Prime Minister dragged the camera. A mob demanded the film, which was turned over before the crew was escorted away by police, the correspondent told his anchorman in an interview also broadcast by local radio.

Seaga's brother-in-law, Hugh Hart, who is minister of mining, tourism and energy, told reporters the Jamaica leader regretted the action. According to Hart, Seaga was "in a sensitive position trying to quell an incident between two presiding officers in his West Kingston Constituency when he turned around, saw a camera pointing in his face and did not know what it was."

In another incident, JLP suppoters blocked the entrance of a school Manley was visiting, briefly delaying his exit.

Several businesses did not open Thursday and others closed early. Generally, there was a strong security presence in the streets of Kingston and Army helicopters kept vigil over volatile sections of the capital.

Close to 10,000 police and soldiers have been deployed across the island to prevent any escalation of political violence in Jamaica's first contested national election since 1980, when some 700 people were killed.

The current death toll has been put at 11.

Seaga Claims 'Intensive Fraud'

FL0902223589 Bridgetown CANA in English 2217 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Jamaica Prime Minister Edward Seaga, the underdog in Thursday's general election here, claimed "intensive fraud" in the voting nearly three hours before the polls closed.

But the prime minister declined to speculate on possible public acceptance of the results and the possibility of violence here afterwards. "What I can say is that the reports that have come in to me show intensive fraud, and there is bound to be high feelings from it," Seaga told journalists after voting.

Opinion polls heavily favour the People's National Party to end eight years of rule by the Jamaica Labour Party in an election that has been so far marked by sporadic incidents of fraud, intimidation and violence.

One woman was shot dead and at least five others injured on election day. There have also been some reports of attempted bogus voting and the stealing or stuffing of ballot boxes.

Most of the incidents have been reported in constituencies in volatile slum communities in the western section of Kingston and in St Catherine where urban gangs have traditionally fought political battles.

Initial reports suggest that supporters from both parties have been involved in the frauds, but Seaga suggested that the acts were being perpetuated by the PNP.

PNP leader, Michael Manley, was not immediately available for comment on the allegations, but party officials dismissed any need for fraud to win. "With the PNP's massive lead (in opinion polls) there would be no need whatever for the party to be involved in fraud," the party's communications consultant, Hartley Neita, told CANA.

Earlier in the day the PNP had complained about irregularities in some constituencies. However, Seaga pointed to the Central Kingston Constituency, a flash point for violence during the campaign, as an example of the fraud by his opponents. "I can't keep track of the amount of complaints and the amount of fraud that is taking place—stealing of ballot boxes, the intimidation of voters," he said. "It is just wholesale. It is not directed at any selected areas," Seaga added.

Two weeks ago Seaga, who has predicted a close election which he will win, claimed that the PNP was planning violence in seven marginal constituencies.

Last August Seaga and Manley signed a peace accord aimed at stemming the violence that engulfed the country during the last contested general election eight years ago.

Despite the pleas for peace from both men—though the PNP charge that Seaga did not try hard enough—there has been sporadic eruption of violence in the campaign.

But Seaga has put the blame clearly on the PNP. "I am sorry about the note which this whole thing has taken in the last few days. It is an ugly one," he said Thursday.

On whether there would be violence after the poll, he said: "A lot depends on what happens. When the reports really come in that will determine the intensity of public opinion. I can't speculate on what's happening there."

Seaga Apologizes for CNN Incident

FL1002015589 Bridgetown CANA in English 0015 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Jamaican Prime Minister Edward Seaga, facing the electorate today, has apologised to a Cable News Network (CNN) correspondent and cameraman after a confrontation in which he reportedly dragged a camera from the crew.

A statement read to journalists by Seaga's brother-in-law, Hugh Hart, who is minister of mining, tourism and energy, at the Press Election Centre in Kingston shortly after a telephone conversation with Seaga, said, the prime minister regretted the incident.

According to Hart, Seaga was in a sensitive position trying to quell an incident between two presiding officers in his West Kingston Constituency when he turned around, saw a camera pointing in his face and did not know what it was. The CNN crew reported that Seaga said, "Get that f... thing out of my face."

"It was not in malice," Hart quoted Seaga as saying. He said the prime minister was "very frustrated at the time."

The CNN team involved was correspondent Charles Jaco and Barbados-born cameraman Rudy Marshall, who has American citizenship. The CNN correspondent told his station that they had been filming a conversation between Seaga and an electoral official in his West Kingston Constituency when the prime minister dragged the camera. A mob demanded the film, which was turned over before the crew was escorted away by police, the correspondent told his anchorman in an interview, also broadcast by local radio.

Hart promised to attempt to find the film, Marshall reported. He said during the incident he kept his camera running and if they got back the tape "you would see Seaga lunging at the lens."

Projections Favor Manley

FL1002003089 Bridgetown CANA in English 0025 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—The opposition People's National Party were in an uncatchable lead in the first constituency to be unofficially declared in Jamaica's general election today, the independent Radio Jamaica [RJR] has reported.

The PNP's Bobby Jones, a businessman took 12,999 votes to the Jamaica Labour Party's Earl Spencers 2,243 with only a few ballot boxes to be counted, RJR said.

RJR computer projections had the PNP leading in 24 constituencies, with the JLP leading in 11. There are 60 seats at stake in the election.

Radio stations reported Prime Minister Edward Seaga and opposition leader Michael Manley leading in their constituencies.

Seaga, Manley Win Seats

FL1002015089 Bridgetown CANA in English 0050 GMT 10 Feb 89

[text] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Jamaica's prime minister, Edward Seaga, and opposition leader Michael Manley secured their parliamentary seats in early results from Thursday's general election here, according to local media projections.

With 95 per cent of the votes counted in Seaga's West Kingston Constituency, the prime minister secured 10,454 votes against 1,870 for Clinton Davy of the Peoples National Party.

Seaga normally gets over 90 per cent of the votes in the constituency he has represented for 26 years, but a re-drawing of the boundary in 1986 has cut his majority.

Manley has not been in parliament since boycotting general elections in 1983, but he is set to return to parliament.

With 92 per cent of the vote counted, Manley had 9,889, or 80 per cent, compared to 2,431 collected by the JLP's Grancelett Cadienhead.

The state-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) also reported the South St Andrew seat was being won by the PNP's deputy general secretary, Bobby Jones.

With more than 90 per cent of the votes counted, Jones had 15,710, against 2,815 for the JLP's Earl Spencer.

Radio Jamaica (RJR) declared the Southwest St Andrew seat for the PNP vice president, Portia Simpson, although less than half the ballot boxes were counted. Simpson received 7,300 votes against 79 for Royland Williams of the JLP.

The radio also declared the North West St Andrew seat for the JLP where only three of the 78 boxes were left to be counted. The JLP's candidate in the constituency had 5,168 votes against 4,786 for Dr Jephthah Ford of the PNP.

The PNP was leading the vote count in most constituencies.

The JBC's computer projections had the PNP leading in 40 constituencies, the JLP in 17 and results to come in from three constituencies.

Of the 57 per cent of the votes counted in the corporate area, encompassing Kingston and St. Andrew Parish, the PNP had 60 per cent to the JLP's 40 per cent.

Panelists on both JBC and Radio Jamaica said that despite the PNP lead it was too early to make firm projections on the final seat and vote count.

Havana Reports Manley Victory

FL1002011589

[Editorial Report] Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish at 0055 GMT on 10 February carries the following report at the end of its scheduled 0000 GMT newscast:

"A last-minute report from our international division's Comrade Gladys Mendoza: The PNP has won today's elections. It already has 58 percent of the country's votes, according to preliminary reports from the electoral commission. John Maxwell, spokesman for the PNP, has told PRENSA LATINA that thousands of Jamaicans are celebrating the social democrat's victory in the streets of Kingston. He will be prime minister for the third time."

Possible 'Landslide' for Manley

FL1002024989 Bridgetown CANA in English 0240 GMT 10 Feb 89

[By Paget de Freitas]

[Excerpt] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Michael Manley's People's National Party (PNP) appeared headed for a landslide victory in Jamaica's general elections Thrusday.

Projections by radio and television have so far given the socialist party at least 26 seats in the 60-member house of representatives against eight for Prime Minister Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party.

The independent Radio Jamaica (RJR) has declared 31 seats in favour of the PNP while the state-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation has so far declared 26 in favour of the PNP.

According to the JBC's computer projections, from 58 per cent of the ballot boxes counted the PNP was leading with 57 per cent of the popular vote against 43 per cent for the JLP.

The PNP's popular vote is in line with projections made by Jamaica's top pollster, Professor Carl Stone.

The PNP leader has not yet claimed victory and neither has Prime Minister Edward Seaga, who has been in office eight years, conceded defeat. [passage omitted]

Media Project Manley Victory

FL1002034589 Bridgetown CANA in English 0345 GMT 10 Feb 89

[By Paget de Freitas]

[Excerpt] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Sixty-four year old Socialist Party leader Michael Manley was returned to power in Jamaica's general elections Thursday.

Both the state-owned Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) and the independent Radio Jamaica (RJR) projected a landslide win for Manley's Peoples National Party.

Radio Jamaica was projecting the PNP winning 44 seats against 12 to Prime Minister Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), with four seats undecided.

JBC had a count of 36 for the PNP and only eight for the JLP.

Among the JLP casualities were Minister of Labour J.A.G. Smith, the Employment Minister Clifton Stone, and Junior Foreign Minister Jeanette Grant-Woodham, and minister without portfolio, with responsibility for industry and commerce, Ryan Peralto.

Also appearing to be heading for defeat was Senator Olivia Babsy Grange, minister of state for information and an aide of Seaga.

Jamaica's deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, industry and trade, Hugh Shearer, had a hard fight to win the South Clarendon Constituency.

Seaga has not yet conceded defeat but Party Chairman Bruce Golding did as much for the JLP when he said, "like McArthur, we will be back," drawing on the remarks of the U.S. general when American troops had to withdraw from the Philippines during the Second World War. Golding said Seaga would soon turn up at party headquarters to make a statement. [passage omitted]

Seaga Concedes Defeat

FL1002041989 Bridgetown CANA in English 0410 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Prime Minister Edward Seaga tonight conceded defeat in Jamaica's general elections.

"As far as we are concerned," he said, "the people have spoken and we abide by the decision."

Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party was swept aside by the socialist People's National Party of Michael Manley, a former prime minister.

"As far as the Jamaica Labour Party is concerned, we have nothing to be ashamed of in our record of performance as a government," Seaga said.

"We can hold our heads very high as a previous government and we will hold our heads as high as an opposition."

Seaga added: "On that basis, therefore, we shall take our defeat with a smile."

Seaga's brief speech was punctuated by cheers from JLP supporters, who had witnesses some government ministers go down to defeat. He told supporters "the work does not come to an end with defeat. Another phase of the work begins at this time." [passage omitted]

Manley Calls for Unity

FL1002122789 Bridgetown CANA in English 0514 GMT 10 Feb 89

[By Paget de Freitas]

[Excerpts] Kingston, Jamaica, Feb 9, CANA—Socialist party leader Michael Manley on Thursday swept back to power, brushing aside Prime Minister Edward Seaga's Jamaica Labour Party in general elections marred by sporadic incidents of violence and some irregularities.

The 64-year-old charismatic leader called on supporters to accept his election victory with humility and stressed the importance of national unity to build Jamaica.

I want you to take this victory with dignity and humility, Manley told hundreds of cheering supporters at the headquarters of his People's National Party (PNP) in an acceptance speech.

Manley, whose party is assured of no less than 40 seats in the 60-member house of assembly, spoke from a high dais, surrounded by PNP officials and several photographers and television camera crews.

I want you to remember that's over, Manley said. You must not provoke people, you must not crow over people. [passage omitted]

Manley, whose party gained only nine seats in the 1980 poll, reminded his supporters of the pain of defeat. When the election is over we who win have a special responsibility to those who lose, the prime minister-elect said. ...They are Jamaicans with every right to their allegiance and their views.

Now that the election was over, it was time for Jamaicans to work to build the country, he said. Everybody has a part to play and a contribution to make, he remarked.

Manley also said that he looked forward to working with out-going Prime Minister Seaga's party which will have between eight and 16 seats in the opposition benches of the new parliament.

Said the PNP leader: "I say specially to the Jamaica Labour Party—we know that sometimes you win, sometimes you lose...when you finish, you have to bury the campaign. I look forward to working with the Jamaican Labour Party as an opposition." Manley expected both sides to work "to build a better Jamaica."

Manley said that he would call on the island's governor general, Sir Florizel Glasspole, Friday for talks about forming the new government. He also scheduled to hold a press conference Friday. The prime minister-designate also said that he wanted to arrange a meeting as early as soon as conveniently possible with out-going prime minister, Seaga. There are many things about Jamaicas future I would like to discuss with him, Manley said.

At a personal level, Manley noted his second chance to serve the country provided an opportunity rarely offered to people. "I am deeply greatful to the Jamaican people. I am deeply grateful to life and to history to have this opportunity at this time," said Manley who served as prime minister between 1972 and 1980.

When he arrived at his party's headquarters, supporters thronged his minibus and jostled to touch their leader as he emerged. Balloons were set aloft and party and patrotic songs erupted. First, the crowd broke out into the negro spiritual "We Shall Overcome" and followed with the party ode to Manley "You Wrong to Trouble Joshua" (Manley).

It took several minutes for Manley to emerge from inside the party offices where he conferred with officials before addressing the crowd, and several minutes more before he was able to start his address.

Costa Rica

Nicaraguan Refugees Injured by Mine Near Border

PA0902140889 San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish 0100 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Two of three Nicaraguans who were seeking refuge in our country were injured at noon today when one of them stepped on a mine. The incident occurred in Nicaraguan territory, 3 km from the Costa Rican border, according to the Public Security Ministry.

(Feliciano Yesca Viquez), 32, stepped on the mine and lost his left foot; Erasmo Lenin Telles, 29, was injured in the face; and (Silvio Yesca Viquez), 29, escaped injury. Although the incident occurred on the Nicaraguan side of the border, Costa Rican Civil Guards administered first aid and brought the Nicaraguans over to our territory.

Public Security Minister Hernan Garron reported that the wounded Nicaraguan refugees are in a hospital in Liberia, Guanacaste Province. (Silvio Yesca), the only one not injured by the explosion, is in the custody of immigration officials at the Northern Command. These authorities will have to decide if he will be considered a refugee and can stay in our country. As soon as (Feliciano Yesca) and Erasmo Telles are released from the hospital, they will be turned over to immigration authorities, who will decide whether they will be allowed to stay in Costa Rica.

Security Minister Hernan Garron denounced the use of mines, which he described as a terrorist weapon that is planted by someone who has no idea who will suffer the consequences. I will file a formal protest, Minister Garron said, because many civilians and innocent people are exposed to these dangers and tragedies. Mines, he concluded, are widely used by Nicaraguan groups that do not seem to care who will be hurt.

Panamanian, Nicaraguan Tied to Arms Cache

PA1002033589 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 2300 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Text] The Costa Rican police have charged a Panamanian and a Nicaraguan with being the owners of a small arsenal found in a private home outside San Jose. The Civil Guard refused to disclose their names so as not to hinder investigations.

Denmark Donates $7.5 Million for Housing, Sewers

PA0902022689 San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish 1200 GMT 7 Feb 89

[Summary] Housing Minister Fernando Zumbado has announced that the Danish Government has converted a $7.5-million housing loan into a donation. The loan had been made several months ago. He said the conversion of the loan into a donation was the result of 2 years of negotiations with the Danish Government. The donation will be used in two basic areas: waterworks and sewers, and housing.

El Salvador

Duarte, Vides Casanova Comment on FMLN, Army

PA0902154089 San Salvador Radio Cadena Sonora in Spanish 1700 GMT 7 Feb 89

[Report on statements by President Jose Napoleon Duarte and Defense Minister General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova; date and place not given—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] For reasons known only to President Jose Napoleon Duarte, he said that he was making a statement not as president of the country, but as commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

[Duarte] "If you will allow me, I do not wish to speak now as president or as a politician. I have come here as commander in chief of the Armed Forces. I have spoken with General Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova, and now I am acting as spokesman for the Armed Forces.

"We have discussed the Armed Forces' position. I want to state that as commander in chief of the Armed Forces, I absolutely back the Armed Forces' position in favor of [holding the elections on] the date being reported. I also back the Armed Forces' support for the Constitution and its announcement that it will not take partisan positions that could become an obstacle to the democratic process that has cost so much bloodshed and loss of lives."

Duarte denied that the Army is divided on the FMLN proposal.

[Duarte] "That is completely false. The Armed Forces' coherent response [words indistinct] has been to wait and see what will come of all this."

We asked Gen Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova what he thought the results of cuts in the Salvadoran Army budget and aid to El Salvador would be.

[Vides Casanova] "During wartime, the more resources you have, the better you can wage the war. Many speak of U.S. dependency. It is true that we still need aid, but if we were not to get it, we could function using our own resources, even if we had to cut down on expenditures in other vital areas.

"What you must realize is that we are prepared to receive gradual reductions in U.S. aid. From a professional point of view, right now all our schools are running at full capacity, and we no longer have to send thousands of men to study abroad. Right now we have schools that we did not have before. We have schools to train troops, officers, commanders, staff commanders. We will also put into operation a public security forces school.

"However, our best school, our greatest training has come from these 9 years of war. The day we no longer receive aid, we will still have 52,000 trained men who

will be able to perform miracles with whatever resources we have available. This cannot be taken away from us, and we cannot be divided. Last year's aid was approximately $80 million. This year it will be approximately $75 million. The head of the U.S. Southern Command has just proposed aid for $97.5 million.

"We could receive more or less aid than that or even see aid stopped altogether over some human rights case. However, aid for next year and part of this year is assured. We know that we have the ability and the resources to continue. Aid will decrease some day; but, then again, under certain conditions it could increase."

In the defense minister's opinion, the FMLN proposal has received much international attention and has made a great impact abroad. He said, however, that the Armed Forces have little faith in it.

Armed Forces Issue Communique on FMLN Strategy

PA0902154289 San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 6 Feb 89 pp 11, 53

[Salvadoran Armed Forces communique issued on 5 February]

[Text] Since the beginning of 1988, the world's democratic governments have voiced strong protests against and condemnation of the armed groups that cause violence and destruction through terrorist actions.

Likewise, international organizations such as the United Nations and the OAS have joined this protest, adding that the internal problems of each country should be solved by political and peaceful means, not by terrorist insurgencies. These events have changed the Central American situation. Because the USSR and Cuba are interested in consolidating the Marxist government of Nicaragua, the former two countries have decided to end their support for the FMLN. In view of its inability to achieve power through military means, the FMLN began last September a desperate short-term strategy seeking a dialogue and negotiations. The FMLN used two parallel tactics: one of them was using selective terrorism, such as setting off car bombs, murdering and threatening justices of the peace and mayors, and sabotaging the economy. The FMLN hoped to blame the military for these actions. Likewise, it used its front organizations, which, in addition to creating more violence, demanded from the constitutional authorities a dialogue or negotiations. All these actions are part of the FMLN's international propaganda campaign.

The second tactic used by the FMLN was a diplomatic tour through Latin America to seek political and military support. The international media and political analysts termed the tour a definite failure, considering—among other things—the agreements reached at the 18th OAS meeting and the agenda of the upcoming Central American presidents' meeting.

Summing up, the international and Central American situation, the Salvadoran electoral process, the FMLN's inability to achieve power by military means, and the lack of popular support are the fundamental factors that determined the FMLN's current political and terrorist actions.

In view of this change of strategy, the Armed Forces have been carrying out a successful military campaign throughout the country since early this year. With this campaign, named "Atlacatl," the Armed Forces intend to find, kill, or capture terrorist criminals, cut off their supply routes, and, most importantly, protect the Salvadoran population and support the democratic process.

In addition, El Salvador is very close to consolidating its democratic life through the upcoming presidential elections. Through these elections, the Salvadoran people will have an opportunity to choose the best ideology and political platform for our country.

The Armed Forces support the democratic process and abide by their constitutional mandate. We firmly believe that this democratic process will lead to a political and social structure that will result in well-being and peace for all Salvadorans.

Electoral Council Proposes Talks With FMLN

PA0902143689 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Report by Marco Antonio Guevara]

[Text] Ricardo Perdomo, president of the Central Electoral Council, has proposed to the political parties that immediate and direct negotiations begin with the FMLN. This would allow the rebels to join the political process and would end the use of violence as a means of achieving power. Ricardo Perdomo's proposal also includes holding a plebiscite on 15 September on pending political issues. The Electoral Council official said the presidential elections could be postponed only until 31 March, because holding them at a later date would violate the Constitution.

[Begin Perdomo recording] I believe we can postpone the elections until the last date allowed under the Constitution, which is the last day of March. The counterproposal states that we immediately start a permanent dialogue with the FMLN. The agreements reached in that dialogue should be implemented immediately, and there should be a political resolve to implement them. The points on which agreement is not reached should be discussed by the people through a plebiscite on 15 September. This commitment should be made now by the political parties and the government, regardless of who wins the elections. The people will therefore be the ones to decide, and I believe this will be the beginning of peace in El Salvador. [end recording]

Ricardo Perdomo spoke before a group of European Socialist deputies who visited him. The deputies reacted positively to the proposal, which they described as balanced.

[Begin recording of unidentified deputy] Right now, this proposal is the most reasonable we have heard, after discussing several options with many important people in this country. This proposal seems very significant, especially the philosophy behind Perdomo's last phrase. This requires a high level of patriotism, strong personal unselfishness, and a firm desire to end the war, allowing the adversary a reasonable level of concessions and a dignified and respectful acceptance. This is the most important message: Both sides must respect one another. There must be negotiations. We will study this document in depth. We also will discuss it with our friends in the Democratic Convergence, with whom we have very strong political ties [words indistinct]. [end recording]

For the 3d consecutive week, the FMLN proposal continues to be in the forefront of public opinion, although no consensus on the proposal has been reached. This new proposal from the president of the Central Electoral Council, which includes aspects of the counterproposals by other groups, could serve as a basis for reaching the much desired national political consensus on how to achieve peace.

Political Parties Meet, Discuss FMLN Proposal

PA1002005489 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0327 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Report by Mauricio Funez—passages within quotation marks recorded]

[Text] After 3 days of meetings among the political parties to analyze the FMLN's proposal to postpone the elections, the attitude toward the proposal seems to be quite unfavorable because the main problem, postponing the 19 March presidential elections, has not yet been resolved. Today when the political parties clarified their positions, it was clear that some are not willing to take the FMLN's word.

[Unidentified speaker] "Our position regarding the postponement of the elections is that this would create various legal problems and a legal impasse. I do not want to give my opinion on this as I am not an attorney. However, I have listened to various opinions regarding what is and what is not constitutional. Basically, our position is based on reality and on what can actually be done."

It has been reported that ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance] had proposed a direct dialogue with the FMLN, leaving aside the subject of the elections. Although the ARENA presidential candidate did not comment on this proposal, it is not hard to see that from the beginning this party has been clearly differentiating between holding a dialogue with the guerrillas and postponing the elections.

[Unidentified speaker] "Our view is that the electoral process—which the FMLN, for the first time, is referring to as a legitimate means to reach power—is not simply made up of an election. It is an entire process that goes back to 1982 and that will continue in the future. We should look not only at the election but at the entire process. We should also seek the reincorporation into the democratic process of elements currently out of the process."

According to [Julio Adolfo] Rey Prendes, ARENA's position was supported by the PAR [Renovation Action Party] and, surprisingly, by the UDN [National Democratic Union]. Thus, the talks are divided between those who favor talks in the near future with the guerrillas, and those who favor postponing the elections and finding a solution to the war, using the guerrillas' proposal as a starting point.

[Unidentified speaker] "Several parties—the Democratic Convergence, the National Conciliation Party, the Popular Union and ourselves—have been trying to find a solution or have been seeking an immediate result in this search for peace. Other parties, namely the PDC [Christian Democratic Party], did not participate, and have never clearly stated their views. Other parties like ARENA, the UDN, and the PAR, are seeking a longer dialogue to attain peace, but at a slower pace."

Another important detail is that the PDC did not attend this meeting. The CD did not want to comment on the results of this third working session. Nevertheless, the fact that prospects for the talks are uncertain means a lot for Dr Ungo. Therefore, it is clear that as long as only one party registers its candidates with the Electoral Board, the elections cannot be postponed under the terms demanded by the FMLN. If ARENA has said it finds no political justification or constitutional grounds to postpone the presidential elections, it is almost certain that the elections will be held in March. Consequently, the results of this meeting will not be what the guerrillas expected.

FMLN Says Leaders To Go to San Salvador

PA0902214789 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2124 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] San Salvador, 9 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—The Salvadoran guerrilla movement announced today that two of its top leaders are willing to go to San Salvador to meet with political leaders and discuss the rebels' most recent peace proposal.

A guerrilla communique adds that Commanders Shafick Handal and Roberto Roca could discuss the proposal in San Salvador with representatives of the political parties, which have been jointly discussing the peace proposal this week.

According to the FMLN proposal, the FMLN will recognize the legitimacy and results of the next presidential elections if the government agrees to postpone the elections until 15 September and negotiate new guarantees for participation in the electoral process.

Guerrillas Name Delegation

PA1002034489 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0311 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Text] The FMLN has stated that it is willing to send two of its top-ranking commanders to San Salvador to discuss the latest guerrilla proposal with the political parties. A communique issued by the FMLN states that Commanders Shafick Handal and Roberto Roca would lead the guerrilla delegation to discuss the proposal with political party leaders in this capital.

The rebel commission to San Salvador would also include Ana Guadalupe Martinez and Salvador Samayoa, members of the FMLN political-diplomatic commission.

According to the communique, the FMLN is willing to meet with political leaders as soon as possible to discuss the proposal and other topics of interest. The FMLN also reasserts in its communique the decision to declare a unilateral cease-fire on 13-14 February, on the occasion of the Central American summit in our country.

Police on FMLN-FDR Plans for Violence

PA1002043689 San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 9 Feb 89 pp 2, 31

[Text] The National Police have disclosed that FMLN-FDR front organizations are preparing a wave of violence for the next few days to show there is social instability in the country.

National Police Director Colonel Carlos Guzman Aguilar yesterday warned parents that they should not allow their children to participate in actions that provoke the authorities, such as the incidents that have taken place in the past few days.

The police chief reported that on Monday afternoon, two alleged university students identified as Hugo Roger Martinez Bonilla and Paul Bernardo Ramirez Mejia were caught in San Miguelito neighborhood, in San Salvador, as they stopped a bus in the street, reportedly to set it on fire.

The two men were seen by several witnesses, who reported this to a nearby patrol that captured the two men.

According to Col Guzman Aguilar, following the capture of these men, several seditious people have staged protests in areas near the university, set vehicles on fire, and occupied the cathedral.

The police director asserted that the terrorists' front organizations are paying peasants to join the demonstrations.

Moreover, he said, the authorities have learned that demonstrations are being organized at the National University, in complicity with the UNTS [National Union of Salvadoran Workers] and other groups related to the FMLN-FDR, to disrupt public order.

There were four of these demonstrations yesterday at which UNTS leaders were seen, strategically dispersed, directing "the masses" protesting the recent arrests, supporting the FMLN-FDR proposal, and painting slogans on walls and vehicles, Col Guzman Aguilar added.

Regarding the vehicles set on fire near the university campus, the military chief said he agrees that people affected by these actions should file suit against the leaders of the organizations who sponsor these crimes and against the university authorities.

Col Guzman Aguilar emphatically said that as soon as a criminal is caught perpetrating attacks against private property, he will be arrested and sent to the appropriate court.

'Urban Guerrillas' Take Over Radio Station

PA1002012089 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0022 GMT 10 Feb 89

[Text] FMLN urban guerrillas took over Radio Novedades in Usulutan City. Their plan was to make a combative appeal to all the people of Usulutan to get ready to wage future battles.

Rebel Radio Reports Army, Police Casualties

PA0902190489

[Editorial Report] (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador at 0000 GMT on 8 February broadcasts an approximately 10-minute battle report on recent fighting with the Salvadoran Army.

The report notes that "in recent hours criminal finance police forces sustained eight casualties near the town of Nejapa as a result of two ambushes." The report adds that FMLN units sabotaged an electricity station in San Salvador causing "serious damage" to the facility.

The station reports that on 6 February, in the area of Suchitoto, Cuscatlan Department, a soldier from Military Detachment No 5 was wounded by a mine. On 7 February, the report continues, guerrilla units clashed with 2d Infantry Brigade forces in Masahuat, Santa Ana, and inflicted two casualties on the regime's forces.

Another report notes that on 6 February, FMLN units attacked an Army patrol in Morazan Department and inflicted one casualty.

UNTS Accuses Police of Attacking Offices

PA1002043889 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSU in Spanish 1800 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] The Salvadoran National Unity of Salvadoran Workers [UNTS] has condemned the 8 February attack on its main offices. A UNTS spokesman accused National Police Director Colonel Carlos Mauricio Guzman Aguilar, who allegedly heads San Salvador's death squads, of organizing this attack. Four individuals in a

taxi carried out the attack at 2130 on 8 February. UNTS spokesman Julio Portillo said a National Police patrol car was escorting these four persons. Portillo noted this action is part of the declaration of war recently issued by the Salvadoran Armed Forces' High Command.

[Begin Portillo recording] The National Police director is harassing and ordering attacks on workers as well as on trade unions and their offices. This military attack was duly planned as part of the declaration of war issued by the Armed Forces High Command, the Christian Democratic Government, the Nationalist Republican Alliance, the oligarchs, and the United States against people's and workers' movements.

Once again we want to state that no terrorist attack on workers, no military attack on workers, will stop the struggle that we have begun. We are going to continue fighting until the workers' demands are met. Our struggle is in support of the FMLN's political peace proposal because we feel the proposal reflects the people's yearning for peace and can greatly contribute to solve the crisis that the Salvadoran workers and people are experiencing. [end recording]

It was also reported the UNTS will submit a letter outlining the Salvadoran workers' problems and other issues of national interest to the Central American presidents at their upcoming summit. Nicaraguan President Commander Daniel Ortega, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, Guatemalan President Vinicio Cerezo, and Honduran President Jose Azcona Hoyo will receive the letter.

[Begin recording] [Portillo] We are going to tell the Central American presidents how the Salvadoran political parties are manipulating the FMLN's peace proposal. We are also going to ask the presidents to intercede so the agenda will include a discussion or a review of the Salvadoran workers' problems and the prospects of solving the Salvadoran conflict. In addition, we will ask them to support the FMLN's peace proposal.

[Reporter] Why isn't the letter also addressed to Salvadoran President Jose Napoleon Duarte?

[Portillo] Because the Salvadoran president is chiefly responsible for the economic, social, and political crisis that the workers and the people are experiencing. Therefore, we cannot address a letter to the person who is hurting us. We cannot address a letter demanding solutions to the same person who we are tired of urging to solve the workers' problems.

That is one reason. Moreover, we are convinced Duarte is totally unable or politically uncommitted to solve the problems of the workers and the people. [end recording]

Finally, UNTS demanded the immediate release of fellow members Douglas Galicia, Leonardo Pena, Danilo Acosta, Fidel Angel Quintanilla, and Arturo Cordoba, whom the police arrested the afternoon of 8 February on their way to an UNTS function in San Marcos.

Cooperation Agreement With Spain Ratified

PA0902194089 San Salvador Radio Cadena YSKL in Spanish 1200 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Summary] The Salvadoran Government yesterday ratified a scientific-technical cooperation agreement signed with Spain in 1988. It establishes that Spain will provide $2 million to El Salvador in 1989. The Spanish aid will be particularly directed toward providing scholarships, food, medicine, and a program in La Libertad Department for displaced Salvadorans.

'Alarming' Drop in University Enrollment Noted

PA1002035589 San Salvador EL DIARIO DE HOY in Spanish 7 Feb 89 p 3

[Text] Members of the University of El Salvador [UES] Rescue Committee [Comite Pro Rescate de la Universidad Nacional] have described the decrease in the number of new students at the university as "alarming."

Between November 1988 and 17 January 1989, the UES Central Academic Administration handed out 7,626 applications for the 1989-1990 school year. However, the low demand for applications is very alarming, and applicants' replies have been catastrophic for the university.

As of 17 January, only 1,179 students have shown interest in enrolling in the university, as compared to over 10,000 in the past.

According to the committee, new student applications were as follows:

1. School of Medicine	538
2. School of Law	75
3. School of Agronomical Sciences	16
4. School of Sciences and Humanities	142
5. School of Engineering and Architecture	142
6. School of Chemistry and Pharmacy	31
7. School of Dentistry	107
8. School of Economics	128
total	1,179

The committee members added that the drop in enrollment at UES is a reflection of the state of deterioration and discredit in which 'University Unity' [not further identified] has sunk the institution. They added that the 80-percent reduction in university revenues "is an expression of the Salvadoran people's rejection of the current administration of the 'University Unity,' which has made the university inoperative."

Nicaragua

Ortega Reportedly To Call for Early Elections

PA0902200789 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1827 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Managua, 9 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega told political opposition members that he would be willing to move the general elections to the 1st quarter of 1990, Nicaraguan opposition sources told ACAN-EFE today.

Ortega mentioned this possibility today at a meeting with political opposition members. Ortega has been meeting with various opposition leaders since last Tuesday.

Jose Antonio Bonilla, spokesman for the Social Christian Party, told ACAN-EFE that the president told his party's representatives that it would be possible to move the election date forward from the last quarter of 1990 to the 1st quarter "for economic reasons."

According to Bonilla, the government plans to call for presidential, municipal, legislative, and Atlantic Coast autonomous area elections during the 1st quarter of 1990.

Official sources contacted by ACAN-EFE preferred not to comment on Bonilla's statements.

The Sandinist president is holding bilateral meetings with leaders of 10 opposition parties, including some that come under the Nicaraguan Coordinating Board—the most radical dissident bloc.

At these meetings, President Ortega has explained in general terms the Nicaraguan agenda for the Central American presidential summit, which is scheduled to take place in San Salvador on 13 and 14 February.

Other Nicaraguan opposition sources said that the talks with the president were "private" and would neither confirm nor deny Ortega's proposal.

The Managua government announced last month that general elections must be held in November 1990, in accordance with Nicaraguan law.

Vice President on Contras, U.S. Relations

PA0902154589 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio Ramirez said in Havana that the counterrevolution's current lack of power has allowed the Nicaraguan Government to discuss an economic plan with the nation's active political forces free of external pressure. Ramirez feels that these discussions will establish the climate for the 1990 presidential elections, about which he expressed certainty that the FSLN will win once again with Commander Daniel Ortega as its candidate.

Regarding the possibility of reaching an understanding with the new U.S. Administration, Ramirez said that this is a good time for talks marked by pragmatism, a quality the Sandinists and George Bush's administration seem to have in common. It is not that we expect a honeymoon with the United States, Ramirez said. We simply believe that the U.S. Government will not reject what all Latin America wants: a peaceful, negotiated solution in Central America.

Borge Announces Dismissals at Interior Ministry

PA0902204189 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 8 Feb 89 pp 1, 15

[Unattributed article: "Tomas Explains Reduction in Force at Interior Ministry"]

Text] The decision to cut back thousands of fighters at the Interior Ministry [MINT] "is sad and painful" because "we are not releasing inefficient people but revolutionaries who helped dismantle criminal and counterrevolutionary plans," Commander of the Revolution Tomas Borge said yesterday.

Borge described the situation, nevertheless, "as an inevitable decision" to help in the deficit reduction.

He said the staff reduction should be viewed as "the quota of sacrifice" that the Interior Ministry must contribute to achieve national economic stability. He added that the FSLN "is concerned for all the employees who have lost their jobs," and has therefore suggested that the MINT fighters seek productive alternatives.

"There is a political willingness to give them land or to have them join coffee or cattle cooperatives," Commander Borge pointed out, and he urged them to join the 10th Anniversary Brigade so that "you and your families will not face so many economic difficulties."

At a meeting yesterday with more than 1,000 dismissed employees, the Sandinist leader told them that they will return to the productive sector as a sort of "commission or service" forced upon them by the country's current economic situation. He also told them that their dismissal "will not go on their personnel records as a dishonorable discharge." He informed them that those workers who had already been assigned homes will not lose them.

Although you will not continue working at the MINT, "you will continue to be sentinels of the people's happiness at your new work centers," Commmander Borge said, because "we are sure that you will always be patriots, revolutionaries, and anti-imperialists."

The interior minister said that the contras' and the Reagan administration's strategic defeat have been two necessary conditions to "begin to solve the country's

difficult economic situation" caused by the U.S. aggression. "The contras are cornered, and that will allow us to begin working on our economic stability," even if this means making radical decisions such as reductions in forces at the MINT.

"We must resolve the economic problem so that our achievements will not slip through our fingers," the Sandinist leader said. "We must therefore stop inflation, reduce the fiscal and budget deficit, and carry out reductions in force. That is the only alternative left," Borge said.

Borge told those who remain at the MINT that "they must work twice as hard," because this will be their personal sacrifice in defense of the revolution. "With less resources and personnel, we will fulfill our duties; it will be a great organizational effort," the Sandinist leader said.

PSD Denies Commitment to President Ortega

PA1002044289 Managua Radio Noticias in Spanish 1130 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] The Social Democratic Party [PSD] has issued a communique stating that it has made no political commitment to President Ortega. The PSD is one of the parties that participated in bilateral talks with President Ortega. The Social Democrats participated in such talks before the Group of 14 [political opposition parties] decided to withhold their participation.

The PSD communique reads: The PSD of Nicaragua declares that the meeting between its leadership and the president of the Republic resulted in no political commitment on its part, because concerted political efforts must involve the Sandinist government and the 14 political parties that make up the majority of the main opposition bloc.

Concerted economic efforts must involve the Sandinist government, the Higher Council of Private Enterprise (COSEP), and other business organizations that are truly interested in Nicaragua's economic recovery. Concerted social efforts must involve the Sandinist government, the Workers Permanent Congress (CPT), and other labor organizations willing to contribute to national salvation.

Ministers, UN Secretary Agree on Verification

PA0902125589 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] After 7 exhausting hours, the five Central American foreign ministers and the UN secretary general last night agreed on the creation of a commission to verify the execution of Esquipulas II.

Reports from the United Nations point out that a proposal made by Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto Brockman prevailed. D'Escoto's proposal dealt with the creation of mobile units capable of moving freely throughout Central America to verify—by request of the countries involved—reports of Esquipulas violations.

The verification commission will include representatives from the FRG, Spain, and Canada, and their work will prevent countries from using their territory against other nations and from aiding insurgent groups within the Central American region. This proposal was made in a letter sent earlier to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Salvadoran Foreign Minister Ricardo Acevedo said today, Thursday, that the foreign ministers will continue discussing other verification issues, which will also be discussed at the presidential summit on Monday [13 February].

Hondurans Reportedly 'Harassed' EPS Posts

PA0902213989 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2047 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Managua, 9 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—The Nicaraguan defense minister reported today that Honduran Army troops harassed two EPS military posts near the border on 7 February, and that at the same time a contra group attacked a town in the northern part of the country, wounding two civilians.

According to the report, Honduran Armed Forces' troops attacked two EPS posts with machinegun fire and 81-mm mortar fire, without inflicting any casualties. The two posts are located near the border with Honduras.

Meanwhile, on the same day a contra group entered a peasant settlement in La Brasilia, 27 km northeast of Matagalpa in the northern part of the country, wounding two civilians, the report added.

These attacks took place a few days before the Central American presidents are to meet in San Salvador on 13 February to reactivate the Esquipulas II regional peace agreement.

Italian Government Makes Donation to Bluefields

PA0902204389 Managua Radio Sandino in Spanish 1200 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Summary] (Mateo Brach), a spokesman for the Nicaraguan Institute of Energy in the autonomous South Atlantic region, has announced that the Italian Government will donate $1 million to help restore the electrical supply system in the town of Bluefields. The money will be used to purchase power lines and other material used in the distribution of electricity.

Central Bank Reduces Exchange Restrictions

PA0902194289 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 8 Feb 89 pp 1, 5

[Unattributed report]

[Excerpt] The Central Bank of Nicaragua [BCN] officially announced yesterday that it was allowing the sale of foreign currency at exchange houses to large economic

groups such as industrialists, businessmen, farmers, and spare parts and machinery distributors. These groups may now obtain dollars without having to be underwritten by another government or business entity.

Roberto Gutierrez, first vice president of the BCN, told BARRICADA that this will basically benefit legally established groups—in other words, legally recognized businesses that need foreign currency to enhance production and that contribute to supplying scarce goods.

Gutierrez explained that with the new measures announced by President Daniel Ortega, the BCN is selling foreign currency to the exchange houses using currency obtained from taxes charged by the Finance Ministry to companies that operate in dollars, and from other income, such as rent paid in foreign currencies for government-owned houses, which until recently belonged to the government's protocol office. These rents now go to help reduce the central government's deficit. [passage omitted]

Panama

Bomb Explosion at Televisora Nacional Building

PA0902184689 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 1800 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] The Televisora Nacional [Channel 2] facilities were the target of a terrorist attack early today. The attack caused damage that has not yet been assessed. A bomb, which exploded at approximately 0300, was placed on one side of the building on Bolivar Avenue.

The blast left a hole in the wall and cracked and broke the glass of several windows in the building. The explosion was so strong that it also broke the windows of a neighboring building, Rodelag [a retail store], and of a video club located behind the TV-2 building.

The police were informed of this and began the necessary investigations into the terrorist attack to find out what kind of explosives were used and to find evidence that could help determine who is responsible.

Televisora Nacional condemns this action because it sensationalizes violence that endangers the lives of Panamanians and foreigners, especially when this violence is aimed at a media organization.

In addition, we express thanks for the messages of support received this morning at the general manager's office and at the news department. These messages condemn this type of action.

Opposition Blamed for Bombing

PA0902232889 Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 9 Feb 89 pp 1, 13

[Text] Opposition groups have begun to carry out terrorist acts to destabilize the country and to seek pretexts for preventing the elections. The attacks have caused property damage at the facilities of Televisora Nacional, Channel 2.

At 0300 today, four powerful bombs partially destroyed the facilities of Televisora Nacional Channel 2. The bombs were placed in specific areas that are vital to the operation of the television station, such as high tension electricity transformers, air-conditioning units, telephone switchboards, recording studios, and other parts of the building, damaging windows and adjacent areas.

This terrorist act against a news organization is designed to force the station's administration to abandon its support for the struggle for peace, tranquillity, and national liberation.

Background

According to investigations conducted by State Security agents, this action is linked to the messages broadcast in December through the clandestine station "Radio La Voz de la Libertad," which read: "Attention Chiriqui...Attention Chiriqui...The rooster will sing three times on the 12th day, 1 week after the full moon. Inform everybody."
[Signed] Candelo (pseudonym of the person sending the message)

Analysis

The following was interpreted from an analysis of the message:
Full Moon-21 January
21 January plus 12 days-2 February
2 February plus 1 7-day week-9 February
Rooster will sing 3 times-3 a.m. (time of the attack)

The devices used in the attack on the Televisora Nacional station—dynamite sticks with timers—were manufactured by explosives experts, according to the logical conclusion reached by investigators.

This terrorist act is intended to create unrest and fear among Panamanians, and the perpetrators are individuals without compassion. They do not care about the damage caused to human beings, much less to property.

It must be pointed out that this terrorist act, according to investigators, has been financed with the Panamanian people's money, which is frozen in the United States and which is used by the opposition that has gone into self-exile in the United States and whose principle leaders are

[opposition figures] Mayin Correa, Bosco Vallarino, Augusto Villalaz, Eduardo Herrera, Moises del Rio, and [former Panama Defense Forces officer] Worrell, among others.

These individuals are seeking, by order of the Americans, pretexts not to hold the elections so they can continue to say whatever they want and fool the people. In addition they want to destabilize the country.

Moreover, it has been called to our attention that U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger, who is allegedly on a tour of Central America to meet with area presidents and politicians, is in Panama. However, here in Panama he has only met with the opposition groups, which are sponsored by the U.S. Embassy and the Southern Command led by Frederick Woerner.

Republican Senator Durenberger slept in our country last night before continuing his trip to Costa Rica. As this issue went to press, he was having lunch with [opposition presidential candidate] Guillermo Endara and Christian Democratic Party leaders.

Blast Termed 'Repugnant Act'

PA1002001389 Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 9 Feb 89 p 4

[Editorial: "A Repugnant Action"]

[Text] For a peace-loving people such as the Panamanians, the terrorist act carried out this morning against the facilities of Televisora Nacional by a group of seditious, traitorous sellouts is an intolerable, shameful, and repugnant act. It should elicit the total repudiation of the entire community.

Sheltering under the protective wing of yankee imperialism, and using the Panamanian people's money that is frozen in the United States, terrorists Eduardo Herrera, Augusto Villalaz, Mayin Correa, Bosco Vallarino, Moises del Rio, and former Lieutenant Worrell ordered the crime of detonating the bomb that damaged the television studio facilities. Thank God nobody was working in the affected area, or there would have been irreparable loss of life.

Last night's terrorist act has a name and surname and all peace-loving Panamanians know it: seditious Herrera, Villalaz, Correa, Vallarino, Worrell, and Del Rio want to destroy the nation's peace to prevent, at all costs, the holding of the May elections, because they already know their defeat at the polls is a certainty.

But they are wrong if they think they can destroy the peace and harmony of a country that is currently struggling against all odds to break the chain of yankee imperialism, and to seal once and for all its future as a free, sovereign nation, and master of its own destiny. No one—let those Washington-lovers take note—can defeat the spirit of liberty of the Panamanian people. And let them also know that their clumsy acts of intimidation do not frighten Panamanian patriots.

Further on Bomb Attack

PA1002015289 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 2309 GMT 9 Feb 89

["Citizens' Alert" segment, read by Julio Ortega]

[Text] Televisora Nacional, Inc. facilities became the target of a despicable terrorist act when someone, full of hatred and frustration, unleashed his criminal instincts by planting a very powerful bomb there, which could have caused innocent casualties in the area.

We urge citizens to remain vigilant and to distinguish carefully between the victims of these attacks and those who have tried everything to destroy the peace, tranquillity, and understanding that our people have been showing in face of the unjust aggression that the new U.S. Government inherited from the Reagan administration.

It is interesting to note that the messengers of violence have committed their crimes at the beginning of Lent, in a blasphemous assault on our people's Christian traditions. Equally suspicious is the fact that the authors of this terrorist act, whoever they are, have demonstrated their determination to cause destruction, pain, and death at a time when the electoral process is under way and an OAS Human Rights Commission is expected to arrive.

Who benefits from disrupting peace and tranquillity with violence? Who wants to destroy the image of our country and people abroad? Who is responsible for the destruction of our national economy?

Citizens, be alert! Ask yourselves these questions now, while those who cannot accept true democracy are planting bombs to intimidate and coerce the people who are waiting to express their democratic choice at the polls.

Citizens, be alert! Terrorism does not identify its victims. If we do not stop these senseless acts, you, your wife, your husband, your son, your brother or grandparent could become a victim.

Let us look around and compare; we see that despite everything, there is still peace in Panama, peace that we must all preserve by saying no to the criminals of terrorism who shed innocent blood.

Endara Comments on Venezuela Trip, Meetings

PA0902214489 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 7 Feb 89 p A-1

[Text] Panama City, (DPA)—Guillermo Endara, presidential candidate of the Civic Democratic Opposition Alliance (ADOC), said upon his return to Panama after attending the inauguration of Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez, that "the new Venezuelan head of state would help Panama achieve democracy."

Endara went to Venezuela accompanied by Ricardo Arias Calderon, president of the Christian Democratic Party and ADOC first vice presidential candidate, and by second vice presidential candidate Guillermo Ford.

The Panamanian presidential hopeful said "he hoped that all of the democratic people in Latin America would show their solidarity with Panama's democratic process."

Other opposition forces told DPA that, during his stay in Caracas, Endara had a 1-hour meeting with U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle.

Meanwhile, Ricardo Arias Calderon said that all of the democratic figures with whom he spoke in Venezuela were "eager to see a democratic electoral process take place in Panama."

Guillermo Ford said that the opposition candidates' visit to the South American country helped gain the support of democratic regimes in Latin America and Europe for Panama's struggle to achieve democracy.

Ford also revealed that the opposition had requested that delegates attending the new Venezuelan president's inauguration send international observers to monitor the elections scheduled for 7 May.

Soviet Diplomat To Discuss Trade Relations

PA1002044189 Panama City MEDIODIA in Spanish 8 Feb 89 p 2

[Text] Luis Barletta, director of the Panamanian Foreign Trade Institute, (IPCE), has announced that the commercial attache at the Soviet Embassy in Costa Rica plans to arrive in Panama after Carnival to finish all the details regarding the trade agreement between Panama and the Soviet Union.

Barletta said Panamanian Deputy Foreign Minister Jose Maria Cabrera will meet with the Soviet diplomat, because Cabrera was appointed to handle the political and diplomatic aspects of the agreement.

Barletta said IPCE "is ready to take advantage of the new trade opening that the Soviet market represents for Panama."

"The Soviet Union sends us millions of dollars in products every year and we must balance this trade," Barletta added.

IPCE Director Barletta said IPCE is already forming a trade delegation of "true Panamanians, who really love the homeland and know about trade activities," who will travel to the Soviet Union to assess our export possibilities.

12 Parties Register With Electoral Tribunal

PA1002043789 Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 8 Feb 89 pp 1, 8

[Text] An important stage in the electoral process ended yesterday, Tuesday, 7 February, when the deadline expired for the political parties to present to the Electoral Tribunal the documents of the candidates who have been nominated for president, first vice president, second vice president, legislator, and corregimiento representative.

On 25 January, the Electoral Tribunal issued Decree No 1 which established 28, 29 January, and 4, 5, and 7 February as the dates for the political parties to present the required documents.

The period now follows during which candidates can be challenged and all documents received must be reviewed by the Electoral Tribunal.

The 12 parties legally registered presented their respective nominations for the posts mentioned above.

It was announced that after the final review of the documents is completed and challenges to candidates are resolved, the Electoral Tribunal will order the printing of the ballots to be used by the electors to cast their votes, according to Article 226 of the Electoral Code.

Voluntary Tax Payment Allowed by Canal Employees

PA0902181489 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1200 GMT 3 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Regarding the beginning of trials of attachment proceedings against Panama Canal Commission employees who are not up to date in the payment of taxes to the national treasury, we interviewed Ricardo Levi, general revenue director of the Treasury and Finance Ministry:

[Begin Levi recording] The Revenue Directorate is taking measures so that all those employers [patronos], regardless of their nationality or legal status, who withhold the income taxes and do not remit them to the national treasury, will not be up to date in their tax obligations and the Social Security stubs of all these employees [empleados], without any exemption, will be issued with a seal that states that they are not allowed to travel or to obtain license plates. In this regard, attachment proceedings are also beginning against the employees who are really not to up to date in the payment of taxes to the national treasury because of this withholding of money that has not been remitted.

Contrary to what was published in a column in a local newspaper today, 2 February, the people who find themselves in these circumstances can pay their taxes voluntarily, regardless of whether the proceedings have begun. Those people whose taxes have been withheld have every right to come to the Finance Ministry to make payments voluntarily.

The regional revenue administrator began these trial proceedings more than 1 month ago, and they are continuing with all the procedural guarantees for the people called to trial. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Bolivia

Government Recognizes New Paraguayan Regime

PY0902141489 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] The Bolivian Government has officially recognized the new Paraguayan Government headed by General Andres Rodriguez, who ousted General Alfredo Stroessner.

Information Minister Herman Antelo told Radio Panamericana that the national government recognizes that the new Paraguayan Government has an honest desire to improve its image abroad by holding general elections.

Antelo added that President Victor Paz Estenssoro has instructed the Foreign Ministry to send a message to convey the Bolivian position to Gen Rodriguez. Gen Rodriguez took over the Paraguayan Government in a bloody coup that ousted Gen Stroessner.

Antelo stated that the Foreign Ministry has instructed the Bolivian ambassador in Asuncion to meet with the new Paraguayan officials to convey Bolivia's hope that freedom will be restored.

Salvadoran Foreign Minister Visits, Signs Notes

PY0602220989 La Paz EL DIARIO in Spanish 25 Jan 89 p 3

[Excerpt] Bolivian Foreign Minister Guillermo Bedregal and his Salvadoran counterpart, Ricardo Acevedo, have signed notes on the creation of a commission to analyze the immigration and settlement in Bolivia of Salvadoran families. Notes on cooperation and reciprocal assistance for the prevention of drug abuse and for the repression of drug trafficking were also signed at the Foreign Ministry on 24 January. [passage omitted]

Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, PRA Merge

PY0702005889 La Paz PRESENCIA in Spanish 29 Jan 89 p 9

[Summary] A Nationalist Revolutionary Movement [MNR] communique dated 27 January 1989 reported the merging of the MNR and the Authentic Revolutionary Party [PRA] into a single party. The MNR acronym will continue to be used, and the party's color and symbols will remain the same.

MNR Cancels Pact for Democracy With ADN

PY0902202389 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1700 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Excerpt] The MNR has decided to cancel the Pact for Democracy [Pacto por la Democracia] that linked it to the ADN, which is headed by former president Hugo Banzer.

In his capacity of national MNR leader, Bolivia President Dr Victor Paz Estenssoro convened the MNR National Executive Board in order to review the country's political situation and make decisions relating to the participation of the MNR in the upcoming general elections.

In a meeting held at the Government Palace, the MNR decided to cancel the Pact for Democracy because it has reportedly observed that the actions of the ADN are at odds with the support of our [word indistinct]. [passage omitted]

IDB Grants $40 Million for Industry, Tourism

PY0802174089 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Summary] The IDB has granted the Bolivian Government $40 million for industry and tourism, and $20 million to be used as working capital.

Brazil

Stroessner Reportedly To Leave Due to Health

PY0902122489 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Former Paraguayan President Alfredo Stroessner could leave his asylum in Brazil for another country with better conditions to look after his health. This was reported by Brazilian Presidential spokesman Carlos Enrique, who added that Stroessner's health needs attention.

On 7 February, after a news conference, the former Paraguayan president was assisted by a doctor because of a high blood pressure problem.

Stroessner wants to know how many people died in the struggle that overthrew him on 3 February. He expressed his concern yesterday during a conversation with Mario Vilalba, political affairs under secretary at the Foreign Ministry.

Police Detain Traffickers, Seize Cocaine

PY1002024689 Brasilia Domestic Service in Portuguese 2200 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] During Operation Alegoria carried out during Carnival, the federal police in Mato Grosso do Sul detained 27 people and seized 15 kg of pure cocaine.

The superintendent of the Mato Grosso do Sul federal police has released the results of Operation Alegoria in the state. According to Carlos Geraldi, public relations secretary of the federal police, 27 people were detained, including traffickers and addicts.

In Campo Grande, the federal police seized 15 kg of pure cocaine, while in Ponta Pora, 340 km from Campo Grande, the police seized 12 kg of pure cocaine. Geraldi added that the operation was successful in preventing activities of traffickers and smugglers.

Paraguay

Countries Recognizing New Government Listed

PY0902130589 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 9 Feb 89 p 3

[Summary] The Paraguayan Foreign Ministry has reported that the following countries have recognized the new Paraguayan Government: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Uruguay, the United Kingdom, France, the Republic of Malta, South Africa, Taiwan, the Republic of Korea, and Israel.

Paraguayan Airlines General Manager Replaced

PY0902145989 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 9 Feb 89 Special Supplement p 3

[Summary] The government has appointed Colonel Cesar Rafael Cramer Espinola as the new general manager of Paraguayan Airlines, LAP, replacing General Raul Eleuterio Calvet Torres. Col Cramer Espinola was installed by Colonel Dionisio Cabello Amarilla, interim commander of the Paraguayan Air Force.

New Central Bank President Appointed

PY0902165889 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 9 Feb 89 p 2

[Summary] Crispiniano Sandoval, former director of the Economic Studies Department of the Central Bank, has been appointed acting Central Bank president, replacing Cesar Romeo Acosta.

Exiled Party Leader on Current Activity

PA0902182389 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 8 Feb 89

["Exclusive interview" with Orlando Rojas, exiled leader of the Febrerista Revolutionary Party, by unidentified reporter; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Rojas] We are being kept apprised of the situation in Paraguay at this time. What is significant—let us talk about the positive signs—is that the people, as we have already said, are in the streets and have taken the initiative to speak up, without first asking for permission to begin organizing and demonstrating in the streets and in their institutions. For example, the workers union movement in Paraguay, unknown up to now, is voicing the possibility, need, and intention of taking control of the office of the Central Organization of Paraguayan Workers [Central de Trabajadores del Paraguay, CTP], which has always been completely subservient to Stroessnerism. This is an important step the unions took on their own initiative.

The same can be said of the political parties. The opposition parties have also shown initiative and have set dates for next week and the week after next—as well as on a regular basis—to hold rallies in public squares; and they are proposing rallies in centrally located areas of Asuncion and in other cities in the country's interior—events which, until recently, were prohibited. You know that in Asuncion, under Stroessner's regime, the authorities never allowed meetings and other events to take place in centrally located areas. In addition, the periphery of Asuncion was always cordoned off to prevent peasants and people residing in Paraguay's interior from reaching these mass gatherings.

We assume that the people are going by what [General Andres] Rodriguez has proclaimed: that he is going to give all political sectors equal opportunity and freedom to express their views. This is the situation as it now stands.

In other words, at this time the militants in the cadres, political parties, and social, labor, and peasant organizations, in particular, are out virtually every day demonstrating in the streets. The militants are expressing their joy at Stroessner's defeat and their determination to ensure that the democratic process truly begins in Paraguay.

Former Health Minister Reportedly Arrested

PY1002024389 Asuncion ULTIMA HORA in Spanish 9 Feb 89 p 51

[Excerpts] In addition to former Central Bank Chairman Cesar Romeo Acosta, who was reportedly about to flee to Argentina, other members of the previous regime, headed by the "militant" faction of the Colorado Party, have also been arrested. Police found that Romeo Acosta had in his possession currency and compromising documents from his administration. [passage omitted]

It has been reported that, for health reasons, Cesar Romeo Acosta has been hospitalized at the Rigoberto Caballero police hospital, where he is being kept under custody. [passage omitted]

It has also been reported that former Health Minister Adan Godoy Jimenez, who was a member of the Colorado Party Executive Board, has also been arrested.

Former Colorado Party Congressmen Arrested

PY0902161589 Asuncion Radio Primero de Marzo in Spanish 1420 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] More persons must be added to the list of arrested individuals.

It has been learned that former Deputies Roberto Velazquez, Luis Gregorio Samudio, Juan Cameron Montanaro, Raul Ernesto Villalba, and Manfredo Ramirez Russo have been placed under arrest.

Former Senators Ramon Enrique Reverchon, Antonio Colman Rodriguez, and Francisco Torales Basualdo have also been arrested.

All these persons belong to the militant faction of the Colorado Party.

Peru

State Employees Strike, Economic Crisis Worsen

PY0902212589 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2011 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Text] Lima, 8 Feb (TELAM-ANSA)—The government of President Alan Garcia Perez is facing an almost total lack of liquidity to pay the salaries of state employees as a consequence of the severe economic crisis affecting Peru. Labor union conflicts are becoming even more serious, paralyzing public administration and threatening to extend the strike to the private sector.

Labor Minister Orestes Rodriguez has admitted that "the government has no resources with which to pay January salaries, much less to meet the demands for salary increase and the payment of delayed benefits." State employees, a group comprising a little more than 500,000 people, have announced new and tough union measures to demand from the government an urgent increase of their salaries due to the accelerated loss of their purchasing power.

Confrontations between strikers and antiriot police became aggravated late last night when worker pickets tried to march on Congress but were prevented by the forces of order. Six people were injured and some 50 people were detained during the confrontations, which have characterized the strike of state employees.

State hospitals are practically paralyzed today due to the strike of their workers, while the economy minister announced that, because of the occupation of his ministry by workers, it would not be open to the public. Other ministries have been paralyzed as well by the strike, and the union conflict is worsening in the state enterprises. The telecommunications company (ENTEL-PERU) is paralyzed by the strike of its 9,000 workers, who are demanding better salaries.

The seriousness of the economic crisis is transcending the limits of public administration and, consequently, recession in the private sector is becoming a real threat to thousands of workers. It was confirmed today, for instance, that as a consequence of this recession the closing of factories and other businesses is imminent, to the direct detriment of workers.

The press in Lima reports in headlines and articles that "thousands of workers are on the brink of unemployment," adding that "the 50-percent drop in consumption over the past 3 months has affected industrial activity to dangerous levels. These industries are also facing intense tax pressures."

MRTA Bombs Companies of Abducted Businessman

PY0902140789 Buenos Aires DYN in Spanish 1126 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Text] Lima, 9 Feb (AFP)—Terrorist commandos of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) this evening hurled homemade bombs at the facilities of five companies linked to Peruvian industrialist Carlos Ferreyros Aspillaga, who has been held by the MRTA since he was abducted in November 1988.

The attacks, which claimed no victims, caused major damage to an insurance company and four plants that produce textiles, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals. The enterprises, which are located in different Lima neighborhoods, are all linked with the Ferreyros business group.

A leaflet signed by the MRTA leadership has charged Ferreyros, one of the main Peruvian businessmen, with "crimes against the people," for which reason "he will be tried by a revolutionary tribunal."

Relatives of Ferreyros have remained silent on his abduction, while the Peruvian press has published no reports on the issue. The ransom and the conditions that the MRTA has imposed for releasing the businessman have not yet been reported.

MRTA leader Victor Polay Campos, who was arrested on 3 February, is being held at the facilities of the Anti-Terrorist Directorate, at the prefecture of Lima, under strict security measures.

Military Forces Kill Shining Path Leaders

PY0902153189 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2322 GMT 8 Feb 89

[Text] Lima, 8 Feb (EFE)—The Lima daily EL COMERCIO today reported that two chiefs of the Shining Path guerrilla group, identified as Felix Trillo, alias Comrade "Wilmer," and Comrade "Efrain" [not further identified], have been killed by military forces.

The two subversives are blamed for attacks and ambushes that killed 4 officers, 41 soldiers and 2 civilians.

The report indicates that the two subversives were killed in a clash 10 days ago in the Cabracancha zone, Castrovirreina Province, Huancavelica Department.

According to EL COMERCIO, "Wilmer" was working as a supposedly peaceful businessman selling [words indistinct].

The daily also reports that in addition to killing the two Shining Path members, the military forces also arrested Rolando Mesa, alias "Victor" or "Felipe." [passage omitted]

Shining Path Kills Policeman in Barranca
PY1002025089 Madrid EFE in Spanish
0051 GMT 9 Feb 89

[Excerpt] Lima, 8 Feb (EFE)—Police sources have reported that today, an "anihilation squad" of the Maoist "Shining Path" fired five shots at a captain from the Barranca Province national police force. Barranca is 200 km north of Lima.

Eyewitnesses have reported that 40-year-old Captain Ulises Jimenez Alegria was attacked by two men and one woman a few meters from his house on a downtown street.

[Words indistinct] eyewitnesses have reported that Captain Jimenez Alegria was hit by four bullets. The woman later shot the policeman in the head to put him out of his misery.

They added that before fleeing from the scene, the attackers covered the policeman's body with a red cloth that had printed on it the words "Shining Path" and vivas to the armed struggle and the communist revolution. [passage omitted]